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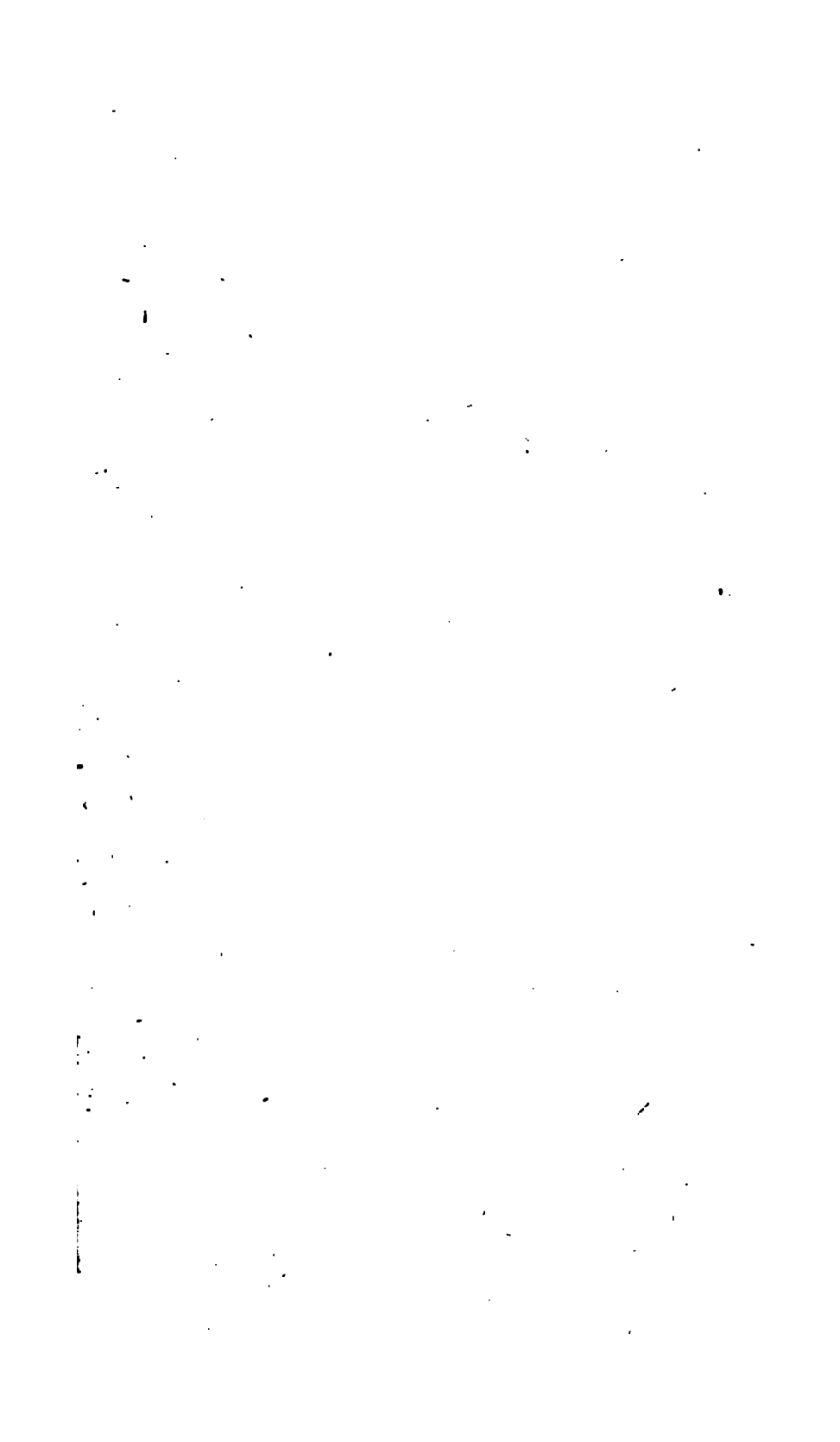








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T H E  
D I G N I T Y  
O F  
H U M A N N A T U R E.  
O R,

A brief Account of the certain and established  
Means for attaining the true End  
of our Existence.

I N F O U R B O O K S.

- I. Of PRUDENCE.
- II. Of KNOWLEDGE.
- III. Of VIRTUE.
- IV. Of REVEALED RELIGION.

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A N E W E D I T I O N.

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By J. B. MASTER of an ACADEMY at  
*Newington-Green, Middlesex.*

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*Qui se ipse norit, intelliget se habere aliquid Divinum, semperque  
et sentiet et faciet aliquid tanto munere dignum.* Cic.

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V O L. II.

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L O N D O N,

Printed for J. JOHNSON and J. PAYNE, in *Pater-noster-row*;  
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MDCCLXVII.



WYOMING  
CLUB  
YEAR

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THE  
DIGNITY  
OF  
HUMAN NATURE.

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BOOK III.

OF VIRTUE.

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INTRODUCTION.

**A**S the human species are to exist in two different states, an embodied; and a spiritual; a mortal life on earth, and an immortal hereafter; it was to be expected, that there should be certain peculiar requisites for the dignity of each of the two different states respectively; and that, at the same time, there should be such an analogy between that part of the human existence, which was to be before death, and that which was to be after it, as should be suitable to different parts of the same scheme; so that the latter should appear to be the sequel of the former, making in the whole the complete existence of the creature, beginning with the en-

VOL. II.

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trance into this mortal life ; but knowing no end.

In the two parts of the dignity of human nature, which we have already considered, to wit, Prudence and Knowledge, it is evident, that the immediate view is to the improvement and embellishment of life, and for diffusing happiness through society ; at the same time that many, if not the greatest part, of the directions given for the conduct of life, and of the understanding, are likewise useful with a view to the future and immortal state. And indeed there is nothing truly worthy of our attention, which does not some way stand connected with futurity.

The two parts of the subject, which still remain, I mean, of Morals, and Revealed religion, do most immediately and directly tend to prepare us for a future state ; but, at the same time, are highly necessary to be studied and attended to, if we mean to establish the happiness even of this present mortal life upon a sure and solid foundation. But every one of the four, and every considerable particular in each of them, is absolutely necessary for raising our nature to that perfection and happiness, for which it is intended.

The dignity of human nature will in the two following books appear more illustrious than the preceding part of this work represents it. So that the subject rises in its importance, and demands a higher regard. Might the abilities of  
the

## HUMAN NATURE. 3

the writer improve accordingly. Might the infinite Author of the universal oeconomy illuminate his mind, and second his weak attempt to exhibit in one view the whole of what mankind have to do, in order to their answering the ends which the Divine wisdom and goodness had in view in placing them in a state of discipline and improvement for endless perfection and happiness.

To proceed upon a solid and ample foundation, in the following deduction of morals, it seems proper to take an extensive prospect of things, and begin as high as possible.

First, it may be worth while briefly, and in a way as little abstract or logical as possible, to obviate a few artificial difficulties, that have been started by some of those deep and subtle men, who have a better talent at puzzling than enlightning mankind. One of those imaginary difficulties is, The possibility of our reason's deceiving us. "Our reason," say those profound gentlemen, "tells us, that twice two are four, "But what if our reason imposes upon us in "this matter? How, if in the world of the moon, "two multiplied by two should be found to make "five? Who can affirm that this is not the case? "Nothing indeed seems to us more unquestionable "than the proportions among numbers, and "geometrical figures. So that we cannot (such "is the make of our minds) so much as conceive the possibility that twice two should, in



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“ any other world, or state of things, make  
“ more or less than four, or that all the angles  
“ of a plain triangle should be either more or  
“ less than exactly equal to two right ones. But  
“ it does not follow, that other beings may  
“ not understand things in a quite different man-  
“ ner, from what we do.”

It is wonderful how any man should have hit upon such an unnatural thought as this; since the very difficulty is founded upon a flat contradiction and impossibility. To say, I am convinced that twice two are four, and at the same time to talk of doubting whether my faculties do not deceive me, is saying, that I believe twice two be four, and at the same time I doubt it; or, rather that I see it to be so, and yet I do not see it to be so. A self-evident truth is not collected, or deduced, but intuitively perceived, or seen by the mind. And other worlds, and other states of things, are wholly out of the question. The ideas in my mind are the objects of the perception of my mind, as much as outward objects, of my eyes. The idea of two of the lunar inhabitants, is as distinct an object in my mind, so far as concerns the number, as that of two shillings in my hand. And I see as clearly, that twice two lunar inhabitants will make four lunarians, as that twice two shillings will make four shillings. And while I see this to be so, I see it to be so, and cannot suspect it possible to be otherwise. I may doubt the perceptions of another person, if  
I cannot

## HUMAN NATURE. 5

I cannot myself perceive the same object: But I cannot doubt what I myself perceive, or believe that to be possible, which I see to be impossible.

It is therefore evident, that to question the information of our faculties, or the conclusions of our reason, without some ground from our faculties themselves, is a direct impossibility. So that those very philosophers, who pretend to question the informations of their faculties, neither do, nor can really question them, so long as they appear unquestionable.

To be suspicious of one's own judgment in all cases, where it is possible to err, and to be cautious of proceeding to too rash conclusions, is the very character of wisdom. But to doubt, or rather pretend to doubt, where reason sees no ground for doubt, even where the mind distinctly perceives truth, is endeavouring at a pitch of folly, of which human nature is not capable.

If the mind is any thing, if there are any reasoning faculties; what is the object of those reasoning faculties? Not falsehood. For falsehood is a negative, a mere nothing, and is not capable of being perceived, or of being an object of the mind. If therefore there is a rational mind in the universe, the object of that mind is truth. If there is no truth, there is no perception. Whatever the mind perceives, so far as the perception is real, is truth. When the reasoning faculty is deceived, it is not by distinctly seeing something

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that is not ; for that is impossible ; but either by not perceiving something, which, if perceived, would alter the state of the case upon the whole ; or by seeing an object of the understanding thro' a false medium. But these, or any other causes of error, do by no means affect the perception of a simple idea ; nor the perception of a simple relation between two simple ideas ; nor a simple inference from such simple relation. No mind whatever can distinctly and intuitively perceive, or see, twice two to be five. Because, that twice two should be five, is an impossibility and self-contradiction in terms, as much as saying that four is five, or that a thing is what it is not. Nor can any mind distinctly perceive, that if two be to four as four is to eight, therefore thrice two is four ; for that would be distinctly perceiving an impossibility. Now an impossibility is what has no existence, nor can exist. And can any mind perceive, clearly perceive, what does not exist ?

To perceive nothing, or not to perceive, is the same. So that it is evident, so much of any thing as can really be perceived, must be real and true. There is therefore either no object of mind ; no rational faculties in the universe ; or there is a real truth in things, which the mind perceives, and which is the only object it can perceive, in the same manner, as it is impossible for the eye to see absolute nothing, or to see, and not see, at the same time.

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## HUMAN NATURE. 9

The only point therefore to be attended to, is to endeavour at clear perceptions of things, with all their circumstances, connexions, and dependencies; which requires more and more accuracy and attention, according as the conclusion to be drawn arises out of more or less complex premises; and it is easy to imagine a mind capable of taking in a much greater number and variety of particulars, than can be comprehended by any human being, and of seeing clearly through all their mutual relations, however minute, extensive, or complicated. To such a mind all kinds of difficulties in all parts of knowledge might be as easy to investigate, as to us a common question in arithmetic, and with equal certainty. For truths of all kinds are alike certain and alike clear to minds, whose capacities and states qualify them for investigating them. And what is before said with regard to our safety in trusting our faculties in mathematical or arithmetical points, is equally just with respect to moral and all other subjects. Whatever is a real, clear, and distinct object of perception, must be some real existence. For an absolute nothing can never be an object of distinct perception. Now the differences, agreements, contrasts, analogies, and all other relations obtaining among moral ideas, are as essentially real, and as proper subjects of reasoning, as those in numbers and mathematics. I can no more be deceived, nor bring myself to doubt a clear moral proposition, or axiom, than

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a mathematical one. I can no more doubt whether happiness is not preferable to misery, than whether the whole is not greater than any of its parts. I can no more doubt, whether a being, who enjoys six degrees of happiness, and at the same time labours under one degree of misery, is not in a better situation than another, who enjoys but three degrees of happiness, and is exposed to one of misery, supposing those degrees equal in both, than I can doubt whether a man, who is possessed of six thousand pounds and owes one, or another, who is worth only three thousand pounds and owes one, is the richer. And so of all other cases, where our views and perceptions are clear and distinct. For a truth of one sort is as much a truth, as of another, and, when fully perceived, is as incapable of being doubted of or mistaken.

Yet some have argued, that though, as to numbers and mathematics, there is a real independent truth in the nature of things, which could not possibly have been otherwise, it is quite different in morals. Though it was impossible in the nature of things, that twice two should be five, it might have been so contrived, that, universally, what is now virtue should have been vice, and what is now vice should have been virtue. That all our natural notions of right and wrong are wholly arbitrary and factitious; a mere instinct or taste; very suitable indeed to the present state  
of

of things : but by no means founded *in rerum natura*, and only the pure effect of a positive ordination of Divine wisdom, to answer certain ends.

It does not suit the design of this work to enter into any long discussion of knotty points. But I would ask those gentlemen, who maintain the above doctrine, Whether the Divine scheme in creating a universe, and communicating happiness to innumerable beings, which before had no existence, was not good, or preferable to the contrary? If they say, there was no good in creating and communicating happiness, they must shew the wisdom of the infinitely-wise Creator in choosing rather to create than not. They must shew how (to speak with reverence) he came to choose to create a world. For since all things appear to him exactly as they are, if it was not in itself wiser and better to create than not, it must have appeared so to him, and if it had appeared so to him, it is certain he never had produced a world.

To this some answer, that his creating a world was not the consequence of his seeing it to be in itself better to create than not ; but he was moved to it by the benevolence of his own nature, which attribute of goodness or benevolence is, as well as benevolence in a good man, according to their notion of it, no more than a taste or inclination, which happens, they know not how, to be in the Divine nature ; but is in itself indifferent, and abstracting from its consequences, neither amia-  
ble

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ble nor odious, good nor bad. To this the reply is easy, to wit, That there is not, nor can be, any attribute in the Divine nature, that could possibly have been wanting ; or the want of which would not have been an imperfection : for whatever is in his nature, is necessary, else it could not be in his nature ; necessity being the only account to be given for his existence and attributes. Now what is in its own nature indifferent, cannot be said to exist necessarily ; therefore could not exist in God. To question whether goodness or benevolence in the Divine nature is necessary or accidental, is the same, as questioning whether the very existence of the Deity is necessary or accidental. For whatever is in God, is God. And to question whether the Divine attribute of goodness is a real perfection, or a thing indifferent, that is, to doubt, whether the Divine nature might not have been as perfect without, as with it ; comes to the same as questioning, whether existence is a thing indifferent to the Deity, or not. His whole nature is excellent ; is the abstract of excellence ; and nothing belonging to him is indifferent. Of which more hereafter.

It is therefore evident, that the benevolence of the Divine nature is in itself a real excellence or perfection, independent of our ideas of it, and cannot, without the highest absurdity, not to say impiety, be conceived of, as indifferent. It is also evident, that it must have been upon the whole better that the universe should be created, and a  
number

## HUMAN NATURE. 11

number of creatures produced (in order to be partakers of various degrees and kinds of happiness) than not; else God, who sees all things as they are, could not have seen any reason for creating, and therefore would not have created them.

Let it then be supposed, that some being should, through thoughtlessness and voluntary blindness at first, and afterwards through pride and rebellion, at length work up his malice to that degree, as to wish to destroy the whole creation, or to subject millions of innocent beings to unspeakable misery; would this likewise be good? Was it better to create than not? and is it likewise better to destroy than preserve? Was it good to give being and happiness to innumerable creatures? and would it likewise be good to plunge innumerable innocent creatures into irrecoverable ruin and misery? If these seeming opposites be not entirely the same, then there is in morals a real difference, an eternal and unchangeable truth, proportion, agreement, and disagreement, in the nature of things (of which the Divine nature is the basis) independent on positive will, and which could not have been otherwise; being no more arbitrary or factitious, than what is found in numbers, or mathematics. So that a wickedly-disposed being would, so long as he continued unreformed, have been as really so in any other state of things, and in any other world, as in this in which we live; and a good being would have  
been



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been equally amiable and valuable ten thousand years ago, and in the planet *Jupiter*, as upon earth, and in our times; and the difference between the degrees of goodness and malignity are as determinate, and as distinctly perceived by superior beings, as between a hundred, a thousand, and a million; or between a line, a surface, and a cube.

Nothing is more evident, than that we can enter a very great way into the Divine scheme in the natural world, and see very clearly the wisdom and contrivance, which shine conspicuous in every part of it. I believe nobody ever took it into his head to doubt, whether the inhabitants of any other world would not judge the sun to be proper for giving light; the eye for seeing, the ear for hearing, and so forth. No one ever doubted whether the angel *Gabriel* conceived of the wisdom of God in the natural world; in any manner contrary to what we do. Why then should people fill their heads with fancies, about our perceptions of moral truth, any more than of natural. There is no doubt, but we have all our clear and immediate ideas, by our being capable of seeing, or apprehending (within a certain limited sphere) things as they are really and essentially in themselves. And we may be assured, that simple truths do by no means appear to our minds in any state essentially different from or contrary to that in which they appear to the mind of the angel *Gabriel*.

## HUMAN NATURE. 13

That there is a possibility of attaining certainty, by sensation, intuition, deduction, testimony, and inspiration, seems easy enough to prove. For, first, where sensation is, all other arguments or proofs are superfluous. What I feel I cannot bring myself to doubt, if I would. I must either really exist or not. But I cannot even be mistaken in imagining I feel my own existence; for that necessarily supposes my existing. I feel my mind easy and calm. I cannot, if I would, bring myself to doubt, whether my mind is easy and calm. Because I feel a perfect internal tranquillity; and there is nothing within or without me to persuade me to doubt the reality of what I feel; and what I really feel, so far as I really feel it, must be real; it being absurd to talk of feeling or perceiving what has no real existence.

Again, there is no natural absurdity in supposing it possible for a human, or other intelligent mind, to arrive at a clear and distinct perception of truth by intuition. On the contrary, the supposition of the possibility of a faculty of intelligence necessarily infers the possibility of the existence of truth, as the object of intelligence, and of truth's being within the reach of the intelligent faculty. If there is but one being in the universe capable of understanding truth, there must be truth for that being to understand; and that truth must be within the reach of his understanding. But as it is self-evident, that there are an infinite number of ideal, or conceivable truths, it is likewise evident, there must be an infinitely comprehensive

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comprehensive understanding, which perceives this infinity of truths. To talk of a truth perceivable by no mind, or that never has been the object of any perceptive faculty, would be a self-contradiction. Mind is the very *substatum* of truth. An infinite mind of infinite truth. That a finite understanding may attain a finite perception of truth, is necessary to be admitted, unless we deny the possibility of the existence of any finite understanding. For an understanding capable of attaining no degree of knowledge of truth, or an understanding which neither did nor could understand or perceive any one truth, is a contradiction in words. Proceeding in this train of reasoning, we say, Either there is no such thing as intuition possible, or it must be possible by intuition to perceive truth; there is no such thing as sensation possible, or it must be possible for the mind to perceive real objects. That what we actually and really apprehend by intuition and sensation, must be somewhat real, as far as actually and really apprehended; it being impossible to apprehend that which is not. Now the evidence of the reality of any existence, or the truth of any proposition, let it be conveyed to the mind by deduction, by testimony, by revelation, or if there were a thousand other methods of information, would still be reducible at last to direct intuition; excepting what arises from sensation. The mind, in judging of any proposition, thro' whatever channel communicated to it, or on  
whatever

whatever arguments established, judges of the strength of the evidence ; it makes allowance for the objections ; it balances the arguments, or considerations of whatever kind, against one another ; it sees which preponderates. And supposing this to be done properly, it sees the true state of the case, and determines accordingly ; nor can it possibly determine contrary to what it sees to be the true state of the case.

When, for example, I consider in my own mind, on one hand, the various evidence from authors and remains of antiquity, that there was formerly such a state as the *Roman*, which conquered great part of this side of the globe ; and on the other, find no reason for doubting of the existence of such a state in former times, I find it as reasonable to believe it, and as impossible to doubt it, as to doubt the solution of a question in numbers or quantity, which I had proved by arithmetic vulgar and decimal, and by algebra. And so of other instances. So that, though it would not be proper to say, I see, by intuition, the truth of this proposition, “ There was once such “ a city as *Rome* ;” yet I may with the utmost propriety say, I see such a superabundance of evidence for the truth of the proposition, and at the same time see no reason to think that any valid objections can be brought against it, that I intuitively see the evidence for it to be such as puts it beyond all possibility of being doubted by me, and feel that, though I should labour ever

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so much to bring myself to question it, I absolutely cannot; nor can I conceive it possible that it should appear questionable to any person, who has fairly considered it.

Suppose, in the same manner, (in a point which has been disputed) a man, of a clear head, to have thoroughly examined all the various evidences for the Christian religion, allowing to every one its due weight, and no more; suppose him to have attentively considered every objection against it, allowing, likewise, to every one impartially its full force; suppose the result of the whole enquiry to be his finding such a preponderancy of evidence for the truth of Christianity, as should beyond all comparison overbalance the whole weight of the objections against it; I say, that such a person would then intuitively see the evidence for Christianity to be unsurmountable; and could no more bring himself to doubt it, than to doubt whether all the angles of a triangle are equal to two right ones; nor to conceive the possibility of any other person's doubting it, who had fairly considered both sides of the question.

In the same manner a person, who should carefully examine the arguments in a system of ethics, and should clearly and convincingly perceive the strength of each, the connexion of one with another, and the result of the whole; might in the strictest propriety of speech be said to see intuitively

tuitively the truth and justness of that system of ethics.

If so, then it is plain, that certainty is, in the nature of things, equally attainable upon all subjects; though beings of our limited capacity may not, in our present imperfect state, be capable of attaining it. In the same manner as the truth of the most obvious axiom in arithmetic or geometry may lie out of the reach of an infant, or an idiot; which appears self-evident to the first glance of any mind that is capable of putting two thoughts together. How comes it to pass, that the truth of such an axiom as the following appears immediately incontestable: That if from equal quantities equal quantities be subtracted, equal quantities will remain? How comes, I say, the truth of this axiom to appear at once, while moral doctrines furnish endless dispute? The obvious answer is, from the simplicity of the terms of the proposition, and of what is affirmed of them, which leaves no room for ambiguity or uncertainty; and from the narrowness of the subject to be considered, or the smallness of the number of ideas to be taken in, which prevents all danger of puzzling, or distracting the understanding, and rendering the result or conclusion doubtful. Suppose the arguments for Christianity to be exactly one thousand, and the objections against it exactly one hundred: Suppose an angelic, or other superior understanding, to perceive intuitively the exact state of

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each; and to see distinctly the hundred objections to be surmountable, or not valid, and the arguments to be every one solid and conclusive; I say, that such a being would intuitively see the truth of Christianity in the same manner as a human mind sees the truth of any complex demonstration in *Euclid*.

It is therefore certain, that all evidence whatever is to be finally tried by, and reduced to intuition, except that which we have from sensation: That truth of all kinds is equally capable of being intuitively perceived, and of being ascertained to minds fitted for receiving and examining it: That moral truth is in no respect naturally more vague or precarious than mathematical; but equally fixed, and equally clear, to superior minds; and probably will be so hereafter to those of the human make, who shall attain to higher improvements in future states: And that in the mean time our duty is to examine carefully, and to act upon the result of candid enquiry.

That we are, in some instances of inconsiderable importance to our final happiness, liable to error, is no more than a natural consequence of the imperfection of our present state, and the number of particulars necessary to be taken in, in order to find out the true state of things upon the whole. But this, so far from proving the impossibility of coming at truth, or that we are exposed to irremediable error, shews, that truth

is

is certainly to be attained by such intelligent beings as shall, with proper advantages of capacity and means, set themselves to the finding it out with sincerity and diligence.

The amount of what has been said on moral certainty is briefly as follows, *viz.*

That it is self-contradictory to talk of doubting the perceptions of our faculties, it being impossible to perceive a truth clearly, and yet to doubt it.

That our simple ideas, being the immediate objects of our understandings, and being level to direct intuition, are capable of being with the greatest exactness examined and compared, in order to the finding the truth or falshood of any proposition, whose terms are not too complex, or otherwise out of the reach of our faculties. And that whatever the understanding clearly determines, after mature examination, to be truth, it is impossible to doubt.

That whatever any mind really perceives must be real, as far as perceived. That therefore, there must be real truth perceivable, else there could be no perceptive faculty in the universe; since falshoods and impossibilities are not in the nature of things perceivable, being non-entities.

That all kinds of truths appear equally certain to minds capable of investigating them. That moral truth is in its own nature no more vague or precarious, than mathematical; though



in some instances more difficultly investigated by our narrow and defective faculties.

That there must be in the nature of things, (the basis of which is the Divine nature) an eternal, essential, and unchangeable difference in morals; that there is a real, not a factitious, or arbitrary, good and evil, a greater and less preferableness in different characters and actions. That, accordingly, if it had been in the nature of things no way better that an universe should be created, than not; it is evident, God, who sees all things as they are, would not have seen any reason for creating an universe, and therefore would not have exerted his power in the production of it.

That the Divine attribute of benevolence is, in its own nature, really and essentially, and without all regard to the notions of created beings, and exclusive of all consequences, a perfection; not an indifferent property, as some pretend. For that nothing either evil or indifferent can be conceived of as existing necessarily: but the Divine benevolence and all the other attributes of his nature exist necessarily.

That if it was proper, or good, to create an universe of beings capable of happiness, it must on the contrary be improper, or morally wicked, to endeavour to oppose the Divine scheme of benevolence, or to wish innocent beings condemned to misery. There is therefore an eternal and essential, not a factitious, or arbitrary, good and evil

evil in morals ; and the foundation of moral good is in the necessary and unchangeable attributes of the Divine nature.

That certainty is in the nature of things attainable by sensation. That reality must be the object of sensation, it being impossible to feel what has no existence. That it is impossible to doubt what we perceive by sensation.

That certainty is in the nature of things attainable by intuition. That the existence of intelligence necessarily supposes that of truth, as the object of understanding. That truth is a Divine attribute ; therefore must exist necessarily. That every intelligent mind must be supposed capable of intuitively perceiving truth. And that we find by experience, we cannot even force ourselves to doubt the truths we intuitively perceive.

That such certainty is in the nature of things attainable in subjects of which we receive information by deduction, testimony, and revelation, as renders it impossible for the mind to hesitate or doubt. For that the sum, or result, of all kinds of evidence, however complex and various, except what arises from sensation ; is the object of direct intuition.

To conclude this introduction : were our present state much more disadvantageous than it is ; did we labour under much greater difficulty and uncertainty, than we do, in our search after truth ; prudence would still direct us, upon the whole,

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what course to take. The probability of safety in the main would still be upon the side of virtue; and there would still be reason to fear that vice and irregularity would end ill. This alone would be enough to keep wise and considerate beings to their duty, as far as known. But our condition is very different; and our knowledge of all necessary truth sufficiently clear, extensive and certain.

### S E C T. I.

*The Being and Attributes of God established as the Foundation of Morality.*

**N**OTHING is more indisputable than that something now exists. Every person may say to himself, "I certainly exist: for I feel that I exist. And I could neither feel that I exist, nor be deceived in imagining it, if I was nothing. If, therefore, I exist, the next question is, How I came to be?" Whatever exists, must owe its being, and the particular circumstances of it, to some cause prior to itself, unless it exists necessarily. For a being to exist necessarily, is to exist so as that it was impossible for that being not to have existed, and that the supposition of its not existing should imply a direct contradiction in terms. Let any person try to conceive of space and duration as annihilated, or not existing, and he will find it impossible, and that they will still return upon his mind

mind in spite of all his efforts to the contrary. Such an existence therefore is necessary, of which there is no other account to be given, than that it is the nature of the thing to exist; and this account is fully satisfying to the mind.

Whatever difficulty we may find in conceiving of the particular *modus* of a necessary existence; an existence, which always was, and could not but be; always continuing, but which never had a beginning; as all the difficulty of such conceptions evidently arises from the narrowness of our finite and limited minds, and as our reason forces us upon granting the reality and necessity of them, it would be contradicting the most irresistible convictions of our reason, to dispute them; and it is indeed out of our power to dispute them.

To have recourse to an infinite succession of dependent causes, produced by one another from eternity, and to give that as an account of the existence of the world, will give no satisfaction to the mind; but will confound it with an infinite absurdity. For if it be absurd to attempt to conceive of one single dependent being, produced without a cause, or existing without being brought into existence by some pre-existent cause; it is infinitely more so, to try to conceive of an infinite series of dependent beings existing without being produced by any original and uncreated cause; as it would be more shocking

ing to talk of a thousand links of a chain hanging upon nothing, than of one.

That the material world is not the first cause, is evident, because the first cause, existing necessarily, without which necessity he could not possibly exist, as a first cause, must be absolutely perfect, unchangeable, and every where the same, of which afterwards. This, we see, is by no means to be affirmed of the material world; its form, motion, and substance, being endlessly various, and subject to perpetual change. That nothing material could have been the necessarily existent first cause is evident, because we know, that all material substances consist of a number of unconnected and separable particles; which would give, not one, but a number of first causes, which is a palpable absurdity. And that the first cause cannot be one single indivisible atom, is plain, because the first cause, being necessarily existent, must be equally necessary throughout infinite space.

That chance, which is only a word, not a real being, should be the cause of the existence of the world, is the same as saying, that nothing is the cause of its existence, or that it neither exists necessarily, nor was produced by that which exists necessarily, and therefore does not exist at all. Therefore, after supposing ever so long a series of beings producing one another, we must at last have recourse to some First Cause of all, himself uncaused, existing necessarily, or so, as  
that

that the supposition of his not existing would imply a contradiction. This first cause we call God.

The first cause must of necessity be one, in the most pure, simple, and indivisible manner. For the first cause must exist necessarily, that is, it is a direct absurdity to say, that something now exists, and yet there is no original first cause of existence. Now, when to avoid this absurdity, we have admitted one independent, necessarily-existent, first cause, if we afterwards proceed to admit another first cause, or number of first causes, we shall find, that all but one are superfluous. Because one is sufficient to account for the existence of all things. And as it will evidently be no contradiction to suppose any one out of a plurality not to exist, since one alone is sufficient; it follows that there can be but one single first cause.

Besides, it will be made evident, by and by, that the first cause must be absolutely perfect, in every possible respect; and in every possible degree. Now that which ingrosses and swallows up into itself all possible perfection, or rather, is itself absolute perfection, can be but one; because there can be but one absolute Whole of perfection.

We may possibly, through inattention, commit mistakes with respect to what are, or are not, perfections fit to be ascribed to the first cause, as some of the Heathens were absurd enough to ascribe

ascribe even to their supreme deity attributes which ought rather to be termed vices than virtues. But we can never mistake in ascribing to the Supreme Being all possible, real, and consistent perfections. For a Being, who exists naturally and necessarily, must of necessity exist in an infinite and unbounded manner, the ground of his existence being alike in all moments of duration, and all points of space. Whatever exists naturally and necessarily in the East, must of course exist naturally and necessarily in the West, in the South, and in the North, above and below, in former, present, and in future times. Whatever exists in this manner, exists in a perfect manner. Whatever exists in a perfect manner, in respect of extent and duration, must evidently be perfect in every other respect, of which its nature is capable. For the whole idea of such a Being is by the supposition natural and necessary; a partial necessity being an evident absurdity. That the first cause therefore should be deficient in any one perfection consistent with the nature of such a Being as we must conclude the first cause to be, is as evident a contradiction, as to say that the first cause may naturally and necessarily exist in the East, and not in the West, at present, but not in time past, or to come. For suppose it were argued, that the first cause may not be infinite, for example, in wisdom; I ask first, Whether wisdom can be said to be a property

property unsuitable to the idea of the first cause? This will hardly be pretended. No one can imagine it would be a more proper idea of the first cause, to think of him as of a Being utterly void of intelligence, than as infinite in knowledge. It is evident, that of two beings, otherwise alike, but one of which was wholly void of intelligence, and the other possessed of it, the latter would be more perfect than the former, by the difference of the whole amount of the intelligence he possessed. On the other hand, of two beings otherwise alike, but one of which laboured under a vicious inclination, which occasioned a deviation from, or deficiency of moral perfection, and the other was wholly clear of such imperfection, the latter would be a more perfect nature than the former, by the difference of the whole amount of such negative quantity, or deficiency. Which shews the necessity of ascribing to the Supreme Being every possible real perfection, and the absurdity of supposing the smallest imperfection or deficiency to be in his nature.

If it be evident then that wisdom, in any the lowest degree, is an attribute fit to be ascribed to the first cause, and if whatever is in the first cause, is in him naturally and necessarily, that is, could not but have been in him, it is obvious, that such an attribute cannot be in him in any limited degree, any more than he can naturally



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and necessarily exist in one point of space, and not through all. It is an evident contradiction to suppose the first cause existing naturally and necessarily, and yet limited, either as to his existence or perfections; because it is plain, there can be nothing to limit them, which is the same, as saying, that they must be unlimited. Farther, whatever is in the nature or essence of the first cause, must be in him naturally and necessarily, that is, is an essential attribute of his nature, or could not but have been in his nature; for if it had been possible that his nature could have been without any particular attribute, it certainly would, by the very supposition. Now whatever is necessarily an attribute of Deity, is Deity. And limited Deity is a contradiction, as much as limited infinity. For infinity is unbounded, knowledge is unbounded, power is unbounded, goodness is unbounded. These and the rest are the necessary attributes of Deity. And as they are in him, they together form the idea of Supreme Deity. The Deity or first cause must therefore be possessed of every possible perfection in an infinite degree, all those perfections being naturally infinite, and there being nothing to limit the Deity, or his perfections.

We cannot therefore avoid concluding, that the first cause is possessed of infinite intelligence, or knowledge, that his infinite mind is a treasure of an infinity of truths, that he has ever had at all moments from all eternity, and ever will

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will to all eternity have in his view, and in actual contemplation, all things that ever have existed, that do now, or ever shall exist, throughout infinite space and duration, with all their connexions, relations, dependencies, gradations, proportions, differences, contrasts, causes, effects, and all circumstances of all kinds, with the ideas of all things which are merely possible, or whose existence does not imply a contradiction, though they have never actually existed, with all their possible relations, connexions, and circumstances, whose idea is conceivable. In one word, the Divine mind must comprehend all things that by their nature are capable of being known, or conceived.

From the same necessary connexion, between the infinity of the first cause in one particular, and in all, we cannot avoid concluding, that he must be infinite in goodness; it being self-evident, that goodness or benevolence must in any state of things be a perfection, and the want of any degree of it a deficiency. To be infinite in goodness, is to possess such benevolence of nature, as no conceivable or possible measure of goodness can exceed, or which can never be satisfied with exerting itself in acts of goodness, in a manner suitable to propriety and rectitude.

Here a proper distinction ought to be made between goodness and mercy. Though it is demonstrably certain, that the Supreme Being is infinite in goodness, we must not imagine he is  
infinite

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infinite in mercy. Because we can suppose innumerable cases, in which mercy to particulars would imply a defect of goodness upon the whole. In such cases, it is evident, that the greatest goodness, upon the whole, will appear in refusing mercy to particulars; not in granting it. We must therefore conclude, that mercy will certainly be refused to all such offenders, whom justice and goodness to the whole require to be punished. Thus the divine goodness is not bounded in its extent, but only regulated in its exertion by wisdom and justice.

From the same necessity for concluding that the first cause must be uniformly and in all consistent respects infinite, we must conclude, that he is possessed of an infinite degree of power; it being evident, that power is a perfection, and preferable to weakness. Infinite power signifies a power, at all moments from eternity to eternity, and throughout all space, to produce, or perform whatever does not either in the nature of the thing imply an express contradiction, as making something to be, and not to be at the same time, or opposes some of the other perfections of his nature, as the doing something unjust, cruel, or foolish. And indeed all such things are properly impossibilities. Because it is altogether as impossible that a Being unchangeably just, good, and wise, should ever change so as to act contrary to his essential character, as that a thing should be and not be, at the same time.

From

From the same necessity of concluding upon the uniform and universal infinity of the first cause, we cannot avoid concluding, that he is infinite in justice and truth, it being self-evident, that truth is a perfection, and preferable to falsehood. The Divine nature must be the very standard of truth; he must be entirely master of the exact state of all things, and of all their relations and connexions; he must see the advantage of acting according to the true state of things, and the right state of the case, rather than according to any false or fictitious one; and must perceive, more generally and universally than any creature, that the consequence of universal truth must be universal order, perfection and happiness; and of universal falsehood and deception, universal misery, and confusion.

If there be any other natural or moral perfections, for which we have no names, and of which we have no ideas, it is evident, not only that they must be in the Divine nature; but that they must exist in Him in an unlimited degree. Or, to speak properly, every possible and consistent perfection takes its origin from its being an attribute of the Divine nature, and exists by the same original necessity of nature, as the infinite mind itself, the *substratum* of all perfection, exists. So that the necessity of existence of the moral perfections of the Deity is the very same as that of the natural. Try to annihilate space, or immensity, in your mind; and you will find it impossible.

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For it exists necessarily ; and is an attribute of Deity. Try to annihilate the idea of rectitude in your mind ; and you will find it equally impossible ; the idea of rectitude, as somewhat real, will still return upon the understanding. Rectitude is therefore a necessary attribute of Deity ; and all the Divine moral attributes, of which we have any ideas, are only rectitude differently exerted. And the rectitude of the Divine nature is the proper basis and foundation of moral good in the disposition or practice of every moral agent in the universe ; or, in other words, virtue, in an intelligent and free creature, of whatever rank in the scale of being, is nothing else than a conformity of disposition and practice to the necessary, eternal, and unchangeable rectitude of the Divine nature.

Of every positive simple idea that can enter into our minds, it may be said, that it is either something belonging to the Divine nature (to speak according to our imperfect way) or it is a work of his, or of some creature of his. We do not say, God made immensity or space, duration or eternity, truth, benevolence, rectitude, and the rest. But these are clear, positive, simple ideas in our minds. Therefore they must exist. But if they exist, and yet are not made by God, they must be necessarily existent. Now we know, that nothing exists necessarily, but what is an attribute of Deity, that is, one of our imperfect and partial conceptions of his infinite nature, which in-

grosses

grosses and swallows up all possible perfections.

Though we have here treated of the perfections of the first cause separately, and one after the other, we are not to form to ourselves an idea of the Supreme Being as consisting of separable or discernible parts, to be conceived of singly, and independently on one another. In treating of the human mind, we say it consists of the faculties of understanding, will, memory, and so forth. But this evidently conveys a false idea of a mind. It is the whole mind that understands, wills, loves, hates, remembers, sees, hears, and feels, and performs all the other functions of a living agent. And to conceive of its faculties as separable from or independent on one another, is forming a very absurd notion of mind which cannot be considered as consisting of parts, or as capable of division. When we say whatever is an attribute of Deity is a Deity itself, which is demonstrably true, we ought to understand it in the same manner as when we say, that whatever is a faculty of the human mind is the mind itself. Thus, though immensity alone, truth alone, infinite power or wisdom alone, tho' no one of these perfections alone is the full and complete idea of Deity, any more than understanding alone, will alone, or memory alone, is of the human mind, yet all the first, together with the other attributes, as they subsist in the Divine mind, are Deity, and all the latter, with the other

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mental powers, are the human mind, and yet neither the former nor the latter can be conceived of as divisible or made up of parts.

As the necessary existence and absolute perfection of God render it proper and reasonable to ascribe to him the creation of the universe; so his omnipresence, infinite power, and wisdom, make it reasonable to conclude that he can, with the utmost facility, without interruption, for infinite ages, conduct and govern both the natural and moral world. Though the doctrine of providence is found in the writings of the wise Heathens, and is therefore commonly considered as a point of natural religion; yet, as revelation only sets it in a clear and satisfactory light, I shall put off what I have to say upon it to the fourth book.

Our being utterly incapable of forming any shadow of an idea adequate to the true nature and essence of the Supreme Being, is no more an objection against the certainty of his existence, than the impossibility of our conceiving of infinite beginningless duration, is against its reality. What our reason compels us to admit, must not be rejected, because too big for our narrow minds to comprehend, nor indeed can we reject it, if we would.

Let us therefore do our utmost to conceive of the Supreme Being as the one independent, necessarily-existent, unchangeable, eternal, immense, and universal mind, the foundation, or  
*substratum*

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*substratum* of infinite space, duration, power, wisdom, goodness, justice, and every other possible perfection; without beginning, without end, without parts, bounds, limits, or defects; the cause of all things, himself uncaused; the preserver of all things, himself depending on no one; the upholder of all things, himself upheld by no one; from all moments of eternity to all moments of eternity, enjoying the perfection of happiness, without the possibility of addition or diminution; before all, above all, and in all; possessing eternity and immensity, so as to be at once and for ever fully master of every point of the one and moment of the other; pervading all matter, but unaffected by all matter; bestowing happiness on all, without receiving from any; pouring forth without measure his good gifts, but never diminishing his riches; let us in a word think of him as the All, the Whole, the Perfection of perfection.

While we view his adorable excellencies according to our limited and partial manner, let us take care not to conceive of him as made up of parts, who is the most perfect unity. While we consider, in succession, his several attributes of power, wisdom, goodness, and the rest, let us take care not to form a complex or compounded idea of him, whose essence is absolutely pure and simple. We are not to think of various attributes, and then superadd the idea of God to them. The perfection or abstract of wisdom, power, goodness, and every other attribute, in one sim-



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ple idea, in the one universal mind, which fills infinitude, is the most perfect idea we can form of incomprehensible Deity.

Here is a Deity truly worthy to be adored. What are the *Jupiters* and *Junos* of the Heathens to such a God? What is the common notion of the object of worship; a venerable personage sitting in heaven, and looking down upon the world below with a very acute and penetrating eye (which I doubt is the general notion among the unthinking part of Christians) what is such a God to the immense and unlimited nature we have been considering!

### S E C T. II.

*An Idea of the Divine Scheme in Creation. The happiness of conscious Beings, the only End for which they were brought into Existence. Happiness, its foundation. Universal Concurrence of all Beings with the Divine Scheme absolutely necessary to universal Happiness.*

SO far we have gone upon a rational foundation in establishing the existence of God; and his being possessed of all possible perfections. From the absolute and unchangeable perfection and happiness of God, it appears, as observed above, that his design, in creating, must have been, in consistency with wisdom and rectitude, to produce and communicate happiness. This must be kept in view throughout the whole of the  
scheme.

scheme. When we think of the Creator as laying the plan of his universe, we must endeavour to enlarge our ideas so, as to conceive properly of what would be worthy of an infinitely capacious and perfect mind, to project. No partial, unconnected, or inconsistent design would have suited infinite wisdom. The work of a God must be great, uniform, and perfect. It must, in one word, be an Universe.

In such a plan, where all was to be full, and no void, or chasm, it is evident, that there must be an extensive variety, and innumerable different degrees of excellence and perfection in things animate and inanimate, suitable to the respective places to be filled by each, higher or lower, rising one above another by a just and easy gradation. This we can accordingly trace in the small part of the scale of being, which our observation takes in. From crude, unprepared dust, or earth, we proceed to various *strata* impregnated with some higher qualities. From thence to pebbles, and other fossil substances, which seem to be endowed with a sort of vegetative principle. Next we proceed from the lowest and simplest of vegetables, up to the highest and most curious; among which the sensitive plant seems to partake of something like animal life. As the polype, and some other reptiles, seem to descend a little, as if to meet the vegetable creation. Then we come to animals endowed with the sense of feeling and tasting only, as various shell-

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fish. After them follow such as have more senses, till we come to those that possess somewhat analogous to human faculties, as the faithfulness of dogs, the generous courage of the horse, the sagacity of the elephant, and the mischievous low cunning of the fox and ape. Suppose a human creature, of the meanest natural abilities, from its birth deprived of the faculty of speech, how much would it be superior to a monkey? How much is a *Hottentot* superior? From such a human mind we may proceed to those which are capable of the common arts of life; and from them onward to such as have some degree of capacity for some one branch of art or science. Then we may go on to those, who are endowed with minds susceptible of various parts of knowledge. From which there are a great many degrees of natural capacities, rising one above another, before we reach such a divine spirit as that of a *Newton*. Perhaps some of the lower orders of angelic natures might not be raised above him at a much greater distance, than he was above some of his species.

Even among the inhabitants of different elements there is an analogy kept up. Various species of fishes approach very nearly to beasts, who live on dry land, in form and constitution. Several species unite the aquatic and terrestrial characters in one. The bat and owl join the bird and beast kinds; so that the different natures run almost

almost into one another; but never meet so closely, as to confound the distinction.

Thus, so far as we can trace the divine plan of creation, all is full, and all connected. And we may reasonably conclude, that the same uniformity amidst variety takes place through the universal scale of being, above our species, as well as below it, in other worlds as well as ours. This was to be expected in an universal system planned by one immense and all-comprehending mind.

Considering the unbounded and unlimited perfections of the first cause; who has existed from eternity, has had an infinite space to act in, an infinity of wisdom to suggest schemes, and infinite power to put those schemes in execution for effecting whatever infinite goodness might excite him to propose: considering these things, what ideas may we form of the actual exertion of such perfections? What may they not have produced; what may they not be every moment producing; what may they not produce throughout an endless eternity! There is no determinate time we can fix for infinite wisdom, power, and goodness to have begun to exert themselves in creating, but what will imply an eternity past, without any exertion of creating power. And it is not easy to suppose infinite goodness to have let an eternity pass without exerting itself in bringing any one creature into existence. Whither then does this lead us? There is no point in eternity past, in which we can conceive, that it would have been  
improper

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improper for infinite wisdom, power, and goodness to have been exerted. And he, who from all eternity has had power, in all probability has from all eternity had will or inclination, to communicate his goodness. Let us try to imagine then, what may be the whole effect of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness, exerted through an infinite duration past, and in an unbounded space. What ought to be the number of productions of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness, throughout immensity and eternity? What may we suppose the present degree of perfection of beings, who have existed from periods distant from the present beyond all reach of human numbers, and have been constantly improving? What degrees of knowledge, of power, of goodness, may such beings have by this time acquired? Let readers, who have accustomed themselves to such trains of thinking, pursue these views to their full extent. To add here all that may be deduced from such considerations, may not be necessary.

It is afterwards demonstrated, that the happiness of the proper creatures was the sole view, which the Divine wisdom could have in producing an universe. Now, happiness being a primary or simple idea, it neither needs, nor is capable of any explanation, or of being expressed, but by some synonymous term, which likewise communicates a simple idea, as satisfaction, pleasure, or such like. But it is of good use to understand

understand what makes real happiness, and how to attain it. The foundation or ground of happiness, then, is "A conscious being's finding itself in that state, and furnished with all those advantages, which are the most suitable to its nature, and the most conducive to its improvement and perfection."

Here is a subject for an angel to preach upon, and the whole human race to be his audience. It is the very subject, which the ambassador of heaven came to this world to treat of, and explain to mankind.

Happiness is no imaginary or arbitrary thing. It is what it is by the unalterable nature of things, and the Divine ordination. In treating of such subjects, it is common to speak of the nature of things separately from the positive will of the Supreme being. To understand this matter rightly, it is necessary to remember, that, in the nature of things, the Divine nature is included, or rather is the foundation of all. Thus when it is here said, that happiness is fixed according to the unalterable nature of things, as well as determined by the positive will of God, the meaning is, that the Supreme Being, in determining what should be the happiness of the creature, and how he should attain it, has acted according to the absolute rectitude of his own nature.

But to return, no creature is, or can be so formed, as to continue steadily and uniformly happy, through the whole of its existence, at the  
same

same time that it is in a state unsuitable to its nature, and deprived of all the advantages necessary for its improvement and perfection. It is a direct and self-evident impossibility, that such a creature should be. Were the foundation of happiness dependent upon the respective imaginations of different creatures, what occasion for all the pompous apparatus we know has been made for preparing the human species for happiness? Had it been possible, or consistent with the divine perfections and nature of things, that mere fancy should have been a foundation for happiness, there had needed no more than to have lulled the creature into a pleasing delusion, a golden dream, out of which he should never have waked. And there is no doubt, but, if the happiness of our species and other rational agents could, properly, have been brought about in this, or any other less operose manner, than that which is appointed, there is not the least doubt, I say, but the unbounded wisdom and goodness of the Governor of the world, who brought them into being on purpose for happiness, and cannot but choose the easiest and best ways for gaining his ends, would have brought them to happiness in such a way. But it is evident, that then man could not have been man, that is, an intelligent, free agent; therefore could not have filled his place in the scale of being; for as he stands in the place between angels and brutes, he must have been exactly what he is, or not have been at all. An infinitely

infinitely perfect Author, if he creates at all, will necessarily produce a work free from chasms and blunders. And to think of the God of truth as producing a rational, intelligent creature, whose whole happiness should be a deception; what can be conceived more absurd, or impious? If such a creature is formed for contemplating truth, could he likewise have been brought into existence, to be irresistibly led into a delusion? To what end a faculty of reasoning, to be, by his very make and state, drawn into unavoidable error?

Besides all this, let any man try to conceive in his own mind the possibility of bringing about a general and universal happiness upon any other footing, than the concurrence of all things, in one general and uniform course, to one great and important end; let any man try to conceive this, I say, and he will find it in vain. If the foundation of universal happiness be, Every being's finding itself in such circumstances as best suit its nature and state, is it possible, that every being should find itself in those circumstances, if every being acted a part unsuitable to its nature and state? On the contrary, a deviation from that conduct, which suits a reasonable nature, is the very definition of moral evil. And every deviation tends to produce disorder and unhappiness, And every lesser degree of such deviation tends to draw on greater, and this deviation into irregularity would in the end produce universal unhappiness;



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happiness; but that it is over-ruled by superior wisdom and goodness. So that, instead of the sophistical maxim, "That private vices are public benefits," we may establish one much more just; "That the smallest irregularities, unrestrained, and encouraged, tend to produce universal confusion and misery."

In consequence of the above account of the true foundation of happiness, it is plain, that different natures will require a different provision for their happiness. The mere animal will want only what is necessary for the support of the individual, and the species. Whatever is superadded to that, will be found superfluous and useless, and will go unenjoyed by the animal. But for a higher nature, such as that of man, another sort of apparatus must be provided. Inasmuch as he partakes of the animal, as well as the rational nature, it is plain he cannot be completely happy with a provision made for only one half of his nature. He will therefore need whatever may be requisite for the support and comfort of the body, as well as for the improvement of the mind. For the happiness of an angel, or other superior power, a provision greatly superior, and more sublime, than all that we can conceive, may be necessary. And the higher the nature, the more noble a happiness it is capable of. The perfect happiness enjoyed by the Supreme Being is the necessary consequence of the absolute and unlimited perfection of his nature.

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The Supreme Mind, in laying the plan of an universe, must evidently have proposed a general scheme, which should take in all the various orders of being; a scheme in which all, or as many as possible of the particulars should come to happiness, but in such a manner, as that the happiness of the whole should be consistent with that of individuals, and that of individuals with that of the whole, and with the nature of things, or, more properly, with the Divine rectitude. We cannot imagine infinite Wisdom proposing a particular scheme for every individual, when the end might be gained by a general one. For, to gain various ends by one means, is a proof of wisdom. As, on the contrary, to have recourse to different means, to gain an end, which might have been obtained by one, is of weakness.

Let the universal plan of things have been what it would, it is evident, that, in order to general and universal perfection, it is absolutely necessary, that, in general, all things inanimate, animate, and rational, concur in one design, and co-operate, in a regular and uniform manner, to carry on the grand view. To suppose any one part or member to be left out of the general scheme, left to itself, or to proceed at random, is absurd. The consequence of such an error must unavoidably be, a confusion in the grand machinery, extending as far as the sphere of such a part or member extended. And as it is probable that no created being, especially of the lowest

lowest ranks, has extensive enough views of things, to know exactly the part it ought to act, it is plain, that proper means and contrivances must have been used by Him who sees through the whole, for keeping those beings to their proper sphere, and bringing them to perform their respective parts, so as to concur to the perfection and happiness of the whole.

The inanimate is the lowest part of the creation, or the lowest order of being. As it is of itself incapable of happiness, it is plain that all it is fit for, is to contribute to the happiness of beings capable of enjoying it. To make inanimate matter perform its part in the grand scheme, nothing will answer, but superior power or force, as, by the very supposition of its being inanimate, it is only capable of being acted upon, not of acting. So that every motion, every tendency to motion, in every single atom of matter in the universe, must be effected by the agency of some living principle. And without being acted by some living principle, no one atom of matter in the universe could have changed its state from motion to rest, or from rest to motion; but must have remained for ever in the state it was first created in.

The Supreme Mind being, as we have seen, universally present in every point of infinite space, where there is, or is not, any created being, material or immaterial, must be intimately present to every atom of matter, and every spiritual being

ing, throughout the universe. His power is, as we have seen, necessarily infinite, or irresistible. And his wisdom perfect. It is therefore evidently no more, nor so much, for a Being, endowed with such an advantageous superiority over the material creation, to actuate the vast universe, as for a man to move his finger or eye-lid. His presence extending through infinitude, puts every atom of matter in the universe within his reach. His power being irresistible, enables him to wield the most enormous masses, as whole planets at once, with any degree of rapidity, with as little difficulty, or rather infinitely less, than a man can the lightest ball. And his wisdom being absolutely perfect, he cannot but know exactly in what manner to direct, regulate, and actuate the whole material machine of the world, so as it may the best answer his various, wise, and noble purposes. And it is certain, that all the motions and revolutions, all the tendencies and inclinations, as they are commonly, for want of better terms, called ; all the laws of nature, the cohesion of bodies, the attraction and gravitation of planets, the efflux of light from luminous bodies, with all the laws they are subject to, must be finally resolved into the action of the Supreme Being, or of beings employed by him, whatever intervening instrumentality may be made use of. Thus the inanimate creation is wrought to the Divine purpose by superior power, or force.

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To bring the animal, irrational natures to perform their part in the general scheme, it was necessary to endow them with a few strong and powerful inclinations, or appetites, which should from time to time solicit them to ease the pain of desire by gratifying them; and to give them capacity enough to consult their own preservation by means fit for the purpose, which are easily found. Besides instinct, they seem to be endowed with a kind of faculty in some measure analogous to our reason, which restrains and regulates instinct, so that we observe, they shew something like thought and sagacity in their pursuit of their gratifications, and even shew some traces of reflexion, gratitude, faithfulness, and the like. Their apprehensions being but weak, and their sphere of action narrow, they have it not generally in their power, as creatures of superior capacities, and endowed with extensive liberty, to go out of the track prescribed them, and run into irregularity. By these means, the brute creatures are worked to the Divine purpose, and made to fill their subordinate sphere, and contribute, as far as that extends, to the regularity, perfection, and happiness of the whole.

We come now to what we reckon the third rank of being, the rational creation; which must likewise, according to the Divine scheme, concur with the other parts, and contribute in their sphere to the perfection and happiness of the universal system.

The

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The rational world being the part the most necessary, and of the greatest importance, as their happiness was the principal view the Supreme Being must have had in the creation, their concurrence is what can the least be dispensed with. Should the whole material system run to ruin; should suns be lost in eternal darkness; planets and comets rush out on all sides into the infinite expanse, or the fixed stars leave their stations, and dash against one another; and should an universal sentence of annihilation be passed upon the animal world; the destruction of both the inanimate and animal creation would not be so great a disturbance of the Divine scheme, would not be such an important breach of the general order and regularity necessary to universal perfection and happiness, as a general defect of concurrence, or irregularity and opposition, in the rational world, for whose happiness the inferior creation was brought into being, and whose happiness, should it totally miscarry, the Divine scheme must be totally defeated.

### S E C T. III.

*Of the Nature of Man, and Immortality of the Soul.*

**I**N order to understand what it is for our species to concur, in a proper manner, with the Divine scheme, and to observe what wise means have been contrived by the Divine wisdom and

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goodness for bringing us to the requisite concurrence, in consistence with our nature and state, it will be necessary to consider a little the human nature and character.

It is commonly said, that we understand matter better than spirit; that we know less of our souls than of our bodies. But this is only a vulgar error. And the truth is, that we know nothing of the internal substance of either one or the other. But we know enough of the properties and state of both, to know how to seek the good of both, would we but act according to our knowledge.

That which raises the human make above the brute creatures, is our having capacities, which enable us to take more extensive views, and penetrate farther into the natures and connexions of things, than inferior creatures; our having a faculty of abstract reflexion; so that we can at pleasure, call up to our minds any subject we have formerly known, which, for aught that appears, the inferior creatures cannot do, nor excite in themselves the idea of any absent object, but what their senses, either directly or indirectly, recal to their memory; and lastly, that we are naturally, till we come to be debauched, more masters of our passions and appetites, or more free to choose and refuse, than the inferior creatures.

It is impossible to put together any consistent theory of our nature, or state, without taking in the

the thought of our being intended for immortality. If we attempt to think of our existence as terminating with this life, all is abrupt, confused, and unaccountable. But when the present is considered as a state of discipline, and introduction to endless improvement hereafter; tho' we cannot say, that we see through the whole scheme, we yet see so much of wisdom and design, as to lead us to conclude with reason, that the whole is contrived in the most proper manner for gaining the important end of preparing us for immortal happiness and glory.

And that it is reasonable to believe our species formed for immortality, will appear first, by considering the nature of the mind itself, which is indeed, properly speaking, the being; for the body is only a system of matter inhabited and actuated by the living spirit.

That the mind may, in a dependence upon the infinite Author of life and being, continue to exist after the dissolution of the body, there is no reason to question. For individuality and indiscernibility being inseparable properties of mind, it is plain that a mind can die only by annihilation. But no one can shew that there is any connexion between death and annihilation. On the contrary, the mortal body itself is certainly not annihilated at death, nor any way altered in its essence, only its condition and circumstances are not the same as when animated by the living principle, which is also the case of



the mind. But if the mind be a principle originally capable of thought and self-motion by its own nature ; it follows, that it may, for any thing we know, think and act in one state as well as another ; in a future as well as in the present. If it were possible to conceive of a material, thinking, and self-moving principle, which is a flat contradiction, inactivity being inseparable from the idea of matter ; yet it would not thence follow, that the thinking principle must lose its existence at the dissolution of the gross body. The moral proofs for the future existence of the human species would still remain in force, whether we were considered as embodied spirits, or as mere body. Nor is there any contradiction in the idea of an immortal body, any more than of an immortal spirit ; nor is any being immortal, but by dependence on the Divine supporting power. Nor does the notion of the possibility of a faculty of thinking superadded to matter at all affect the point in question. Though it is certain, that a pretended system of matter with a thinking faculty must either be nothing more than matter animated by spirit, or a substance of a quite opposite nature to all that we call matter, about which we cannot reason, having no ideas of it. Farther, we have reason to conclude, that the body depends on the mind for life and motion ; not the mind on the body. We find, that the mind is not impaired by the loss of whole limbs of the body ; that the mind is often very active, when the body is at rest ; that the mind  
corrects

corrects the errors, presented to it through the senses ; that even in the decay, disorder, or total suspension, of the senses ; the mind is affected just as she might be expected to be, when obliged to use untoward instruments, and to have wrong representations, and false impressions, forced upon her, or when deprived of all traces, and quite put out of her element. For, the case of persons intoxicated with liquor, or in a dream, or raving in a fever, or distracted, all which have a resemblance to one another, may be conceived of in the following manner. The mind, or thinking being, which at present receives impressions only by means of the material organ of the brain, and the senses through which intelligence is communicated into the brain ; the mind, I say, being at present confined to act only within the dark cell of the brain, and to receive very lively impressions from it, which is the consequence of a law of nature, to us inexplicable ; may be exactly in the same manner affected by the impressions made on the brain by a disease, or other accidental cause, as if they were made by some real external object. For example, if in a violent fever, or a frenzy, the same impressions be, by a preternatural flow of the animal spirits, made on the retina of the eye, as would be made if the person was to be in a field of battle, where two armies were engaged ; and if at the same time it happened, that by the same means the same impressions should be made on the auditory nerve, as would be made if the

person were within hearing of the noise of drums, the clangor of trumpets, and the shouts of men ; how should the spiritual being, immured as she is in her dark cell, and unused to such a deception as this, how should she know it was a deception, any more, than an *Indian*, who had never seen a picture, could find at the first view, that the canvas was really flat, though it appeared to exhibit a landskip of several miles in extent ? It is therefore conceivable that the mind may be strongly and forcibly affected by a material system, without being itself material. And that the mind is not material, appears farther, in that she abstracts herself from the body, when she would apply most closely to thought ; that the soul is capable of purely abstract ideas, as of rectitude, order, virtue, vice, and the like ; to which matter furnishes no archetype, nor has any connexion with them ; that it is affected by what is confessedly not matter, as the sense of words heard, or read in books, which if it were material it could not be ; which shews our minds to be quite different beings from the body, and naturally independent on it ; that we can conceive of matter in a way, which we cannot of spirit, and contrariwise ; matter being still to be, without any contradiction, conceived of as divisible and inactive ; whereas it is impossible to apply those ideas to spirit, without a direct absurdity, which shews, that the mind is the same, conscious, indivisible, identical being, though the body is

is subject to continual change, addition, and diminution ; that the mind continues to improve in the most noble and valuable accomplishments, when the body is going fast to decay ; that, even the moment before the dissolution of the body, the vigour of the mind seems often wholly unimpaired ; that the interests of the mind and body are always different, and often opposite, as in the case of being obliged to give up life for truth. These considerations, attended to duly, shew, that we have no reason to question the possibility of the living principle's subsisting after the dissolution of the material vehicle.

As to the difficulty arising from the consideration of the close connexion between the body and soul, and the impressions made by the one upon the other, which has led some to question whether they are in reality at all distinct beings, it is to be remembered, that this connexion, which is absolutely necessary in the present state, is wholly owing to the divine disposal, and not to any likeness, much less sameness, of the thinking, intelligent agent with the gross corporeal vehicle. If it had so pleased the Author of our being, he could have fixed such a natural connexion between our minds and the moon, or planets, that their various revolutions and aspects might have affected us, in the same manner as now the health or disorder of our bodies does. But this would not have made the moon and planets a part of us. No more do the mutual impressions made reciprocally

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proccally by the mind and body, prove them to be the same, or that the human nature is all body, especially considering that, as already observed, in many cases we evidently perceive an independency and difference between them.

It cannot be pretended that there is any absurdity in conceiving of the animating principle as existing even before conception in the womb, nor of a new union commencing at a certain period, by a fixed law of nature, between it and a corporeal vehicle, which union may be supposed to continue, according to certain established laws of nature, for a long course of years; and may be broke, or dissolved, in the same regular manner; so that the system of matter, to which the animating principle was united, may be no more to it, than any other system of matter.

It is remarkable, that all living creatures, especially our species, on their first appearance in life, seem at a loss, as if the mind was not, in the infant state, quite engaged and united to its new vehicle, and therefore could not command and wield it properly. Sleep, infirm old age, severe sickness, and fainting, seem, according to certain established laws of nature, partly to loosen, or relax the union between the living principle, the mind, and the material vehicle; and, as it were, to set them at a greater distance from one another, or make them more indifferent to one another, as if (so to speak) almost beyond the sphere of one another's attraction. Death is nothing

thing more than the total dissolution of this tie, occasioned, in a natural way, by some alteration in the material frame ; not in the mind ; whereby that which formed the nexus, or union, whatever that may be, is removed or disengaged. It is probable, that the anxiety and distress, under which the mind commonly feels itself at death, is owing rather to the manner and process of the dissolution, than to the dissolution itself. For we observe, that very aged persons, and infants, often die without a struggle. The union between soul and body, being already weak, is easily dissolved. And if sleep be, as it seems, a partial dissolution of this union, or a setting the mind and body at a greater distance from one another, the reason why it gives no disturbance is, that it comes on in such a manner as not forcibly to tear in pieces, but gently to relax, the ligatures, whatever they are, between the material and spiritual natures. That there is an analogy between sleep and death, is evident from observing, that sleep sometimes goes on to death, as in lethargic cases, and in the effects of strong opiates. And it is remarkable, that the life of a person, who has taken too large a dose of opium, cannot be saved but by forcibly waking him ; as if the mutual action of the mind and body upon one another was the medium of the union ; and that, if their mutual action upon one another comes to be lessened to a certain degree, they become indifferent to one another, and the union between them ceases of course,

course, as two companions walking together in the dark may come to lose one another, by dropping their conversation, and keeping a profound silence.

It is probable, that the condition, in which the mind, just disengaged from the body, feels itself, is very much like to that of dreaming; all confusion, uncertainty, and incoherence of ideas; and that, in some measure, like the infant-mind newly entered upon a state wholly unknown, it finds itself greatly at a loss, and exerts itself with much difficulty and disadvantage; till a little time and habit qualifies it for a new and untried scene of action\*.

If the true account of the human nature be, that the spiritual, active, thinking principle is united to a subtle ethereal vehicle, whose residence is in the brain, and that death is the departure of the soul and spirit from the body; which was the notion of the *Platonic* philosophers,

\* The author is not ashamed to confess, that he now thinks his former opinion concerning the state of the dead, as represented in these paragraphs, erroneous; though he chooses not to alter the text on that account; thinking it hardly fair to lessen the value of former editions, by adding to succeeding ones, what is better laid before readers in separate publications. The author is now inclinable to think Doctor Law's opinion, in his *Theory of Religion*, more rational, as well as more scriptural, than the generally received notion, of the soul's being in a full state of consciousness and activity, between death and resurrection. It is a point of mere speculation, no way materially affecting either faith or manners.

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and *Jewish* rabbi's, and seems to be countenanced by the apostle *Paul*; if this be the true account of the human make, there is no difficulty in conceiving the possibility of the mind's thinking and acting in a state of total-separation from the gross terrestrial body, notwithstanding the seeming difficulty of a suspension of thought in profound sleep, or in a fainting fit. For the embodied and separate states are so very different, there is no reasoning from one to the other on every point. It may be impossible for the mind, while imprisoned in the body, in a great disorder of the animal frame, to join ideas together, for want of its traces in the brain, and other implements of reasoning, to which it has all along been accustomed, and which it cannot do without; and yet, it may be possible for the same mind, when freed from its dark prison, to go to work in a quite different manner, to receive impressions immediately from the objects themselves, which it received before by the intervention of the senses, and to contrive for itself memorial traces, and the other necessary apparatus for improvement, in a much more perfect manner. It may then be able to penetrate into the internal substance, and examine the minute arrangement of the smallest-corpuscles of all kinds of material systems. By applying its ductile and delicate vehicle, which may be considered as all sensation, all eye, all ear, and touch, it may accurately take off not only the real form, but the internal nature, and  
state



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and consequently, our whole business being with the present life, it is not to be supposed, that our infinitely wise Creator would have suffered our attention to have been taken off from it, by our being led into the notion of any other; much less, that our whole species should be irresistibly possessed with the same useless and hurtful delusion: nor that he would have universally impressed their minds with a false notion of an account to be hereafter given of all their thoughts, words, and actions. Had he wanted them to conform themselves to his general scheme in the government of the world, he could have brought that about, and certainly would, by any other means, rather than by suffering them to be misled into a series of groundless imaginations and delusions. Nor would the infinitely-wise Creator have given us these vast and insatiable desires after endless improvement in knowledge, this reach of thought, which expatiates through creation, and extends itself beyond the limits of the universe; nor would he have fired our souls with the prospect of an endless existence, for carrying on those improvements, only to curse us with a cruel disappointment. Nor would he have made the human soul for himself; fixed its desires and wishes upon the enjoyment of his own perfections; drawn and engaged it to love, admire, and breathe after the fruition of him; raised it to this lofty height of ambition, only to throw it down, baffled and disappointed, into a state of insensibility

insensibility and annihilation. Nor would he have formed the mind with a capacity for continual advances in goodness, and nearer approaches to himself, only to give us an opportunity of fitting ourselves for a future state of perfection and happiness, to which according as we approached nearer and nearer, we should approach nearer and nearer to the total disappointment of all our labours and all our hopes, and find the whole at last to have been no other than a golden dream.

The only reason why any one has recourse to artifice and deceit, is, that he has not sagacity enough to gain his ends by proceeding in a fair and open manner. Whoever is master of his scheme, has no need of tricks and arts to compass his designs. And who will dare to affirm, that Infinite Wisdom had no way of bringing about his important designs for the good of his universe, but by deluding his reasonable creatures, or suffering them to be universally deluded, which is the same, into the belief of a future Utopia? We know of nothing in nature analogous to this. Whatever our species, or any other, are liable to be mistaken in, is owing to the mere imperfection of sense, or understanding, unavoidable in beings of inferior rank: but we have no idea of a whole species irresistibly led into a positive error, especially of such consequence as that of the expectation of a future state, if it were an error. And here it is highly worthy of remark, that it is not the weak, the

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short-sighted, and the ignorant part of the human kind, that are most inclinable to the persuasion of the immortality of the soul, as might have been expected, were it an error ; but quite otherwise. While the most sordid, degenerate, and barbarous of the species have overlooked, or not been sufficiently persuaded of it ; the wisest and greatest of mankind have been believers and teachers of this important doctrine ; which shews it in a light wholly unaccountable, if it be supposed an error.

The irregular distribution of happiness and misery in the present state renders it highly probable, that this is only a part, not the whole of the Divine oeconomy with respect to our species.

Do we not find, that in the present state the highest degree of goodness is, in some cases, attended with the greatest unhappiness ? For tho' virtue must, in general, be owned to be the likeliest means for procuring happiness in the present, as well as future state ; yet there are numerous exceptions to this rule. I appeal to the experience of every man, who, from a course of thoughtlessness and libertinism, has had the happiness to be brought to some concern about the interests of futurity, whether he does not now suffer a thousand times more of the anguish of remorse from a reflexion upon the least failure, than he did formerly for the grossest enormities. If so, it is evident, that improvement in virtue brings with it such a delicacy of sentiment, as  
must

must often break in upon the tranquillity of the mind, and produce an uneasiness to which the hardened sinner is wholly a stranger. So that in this instance, we see that virtue is not in the present life its own reward, which infers the necessity of a future reward in a life to come.

Nor is the permission of persecution or tyranny, by which the best of mankind always suffer the most severely, while wickedness reigns triumphant, at all reconcileable with the goodness of the universal Governor, upon any footing, but that of a future state, wherein the sufferings, to which the mere incapacity of resisting, or the strict adherence to truth, has exposed multitudes of the species, of the best of the species, shall be suitably made up for. When an *Alexander*, or a *Cæsar*, is let loose upon his fellow-creatures, when he pours desolation, like a deluge, over one side of the globe, and plunges half the human species in a sea of their own blood, what must be the whole amount of the calamity suffered by millions, involved in the various woes of war, of which great numbers must be of the tender sex, and helpless age! What must be the terror of those, who dread the hour, when the merciless savage, habituated to scenes of cruelty, will give orders to his hellhounds to begin the general massacre? What the carnage, when it is begun? Men slaughtered in heaps in the streets and fields; women ravished and murdered before their husbands faces; children dashed against the

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walls in the sight of the parents; cities wrapt in flames; the shouts of the conquerors; the groans of the dying; the ghastly visages of the dead; universal horror, misery, and desolation. All to gain a spot of ground, an useless addition of revenue, or even the visionary satisfaction of a sounding name, to swell the pride of a wretched worm, who will himself quickly sink among the heaps his fury has made, himself a prey to the universal leveller of mankind. And what is all history full of, but such horrid scenes as these? Has not ambition or superstition set mankind, in all ages and nations, in arms against one another; turned this world into a general shambles, and fattened every soil with slaughtered thousands?

The blood-thirsty inquisitor, who has grown grey in the service of the Mother of abominations, who has long made it his boast, that none of her priests has brought so many hundreds of victims to her horrid altars, as himself; the venerable butcher sits on his bench. The helpless innocent is brought bound from his dungeon, where no voice of comfort is heard, no friendly eye glances compassion, where damp, and stench, perpetual darkness and horrid silence reign, except when broken by the echo of his groans; where months, and years, have been languish'd out in want of all that nature requires; an outcast from family, from friends, from ease and affluence,  
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and a pleasant habitation, from the blessed light of the world. He kneels; he weeps; he begs for pity. He sues for mercy by the love of God, and by the bowels of humanity. Already cruelly exercised by torture, nature shudders at the thought of repeating the dreadful sufferings, under which she had almost sunk before. He protests his innocence. He calls Heaven to witness for him; and implores the Divine power to touch the flinty heart, which all his cries and tears cannot move. The unfeeling monster talks of heresy, and profanation of his cursed superstition. His furious zeal for priestly power, and a worldly church, stops his ear against the melting voice of a fellow-creature prostrate at his feet. And the terror necessary to be kept up among the blinded votaries, renders cruelty a proper instrument of religious slavery. The dumb executioners strip him of his rags. The rack is prepared. The ropes are extended. The wheels are driven round. The bloody whip and hissing pincers tear the quivering flesh from the bones. The pullies raise him to the roof. The sinews crack. The joints are torn asunder. The pavement swims in blood. The hardened minister of infernal cruelty sits unmov'd. His heart has long been steel'd against compassion. He listens to the groans, he views the strong convulsive pangs, when nature shrinks, and struggles, and agonising pain rages in every pore. He counts the

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heart-rending shrieks of a fellow-creature in torment, and enjoys his anguish with the calmness of one who views a philosophical experiment. The wretched victim expires before him. He feels no movement, but of vexation at being deprived of his prey, before he had sufficiently glutted his hellish fury. He rises. No thunder roars. No lightning blasts him. He goes on to fill up the measure of his wickedness. He lives out his days in ease and luxury. He goes down to the grave gorged with the blood of the innocent; nor does the earth cast up again his cursed carcase.

Can any one think such scenes would be suffered to be acted in a world, at the head of which sits enthron'd in supreme majesty a Being of infinite goodness, and perfect justice, who has only to give his word, and such monsters would be in an instant driven by his thunder to the centre; can any one think that such proceedings would be suffered to pass unpunished, if there was not a life to come, a day appointed for rewarding every man according to his works?

Some have thought, that part of the arguments for the immortality of the human soul, being applicable to inferior natures, might be said to prove too much, and therefore to prove nothing. For that the unequal allotment of happiness and misery among brute creatures seems to require that those, who have suffered unjustly

in this state, should have such sufferings compensated to them in some future existence.

This difficulty is easily got over, if we consider, first, that the sufferings of the inferior creation are, so to speak, only momentary ; whereas fore-boding fears, and cutting reflexions, encrease human miseries a thousand-fold ; which greatly abates the necessity of a future existence to make up for what they may have suffered here. Besides, justice does not require, that any species of creatures be wholly exempted from suffering ; but only, that, upon the whole, all creatures have it in their power to be gainers by their existence, that is, that they have in their power a greater share of happiness than misery. If any one thinks it most probable, that all creatures, once introduced into existence, are to be continued in being, till they deserve, by perverse wickedness, to be annihilated ; and that, as material substances, which seem to us to perish, are only dissipated into small invisible parts, so the spirits of all living creatures, at death, are only removed into another state ; if any one, I say, thinks he sees reason to believe the immortality, in a succession of states, of all living creatures, I do not see, that my subject obliges me to confute such an opinion.

Though the distinguishing character of man is reason, it is evident, that reason does not in general prevail in the present state ; but on the



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contrary vice and folly and madness seem to be most of what this world was made for, if it be the whole of man. And surely, such an oeconomy is not worthy to be ascribed to an infinitely wise Creator. Is it a design worthy of infinite goodness to produce into being a species to be continued for several thousand years, to harass and massacre one another, and then to sink again into the earth, and fatten it with their carcases? The Creator can never be supposed to have produced beings on purpose for suffering, and to be losers by their existence, without any fault of their own. Upon this foot, the brute creatures would have eminently the advantage of our species. But it is very improbable, that the beneficent author of nature has taken more care, and made a better provision for the inferior creatures, than for us. And still more unlikely, that he has given the advantage upon the whole to the most worthless part of our species, and exposed the best of mankind to unavoidable distress and hardship, as is conspicuously the case in innumerable instances in this world. For in the case of tyranny and persecution, it is evident, that all that the good man has to support him under his cruel sufferings, is the testimony of his conscience; the persuasion of the Divine approbation; and the hope of a future recompence of honour and happiness for the pain and shame he has suffered here. But, to say, there is no future state of retribution, is to say, That He, who placed  
conscience

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conscience in the human breast, did so for the sole purpose of making the best of men the most unhappy; that He, who most loves, and best knows the sincere and upright, will shew no favour to the sincere and upright, but the contrary; and consequently, that virtue is something worse than an empty name, being a real and substantial misfortune to its most faithful votary. To say the truth, were the present state the whole of the human existence, it is evident, that to give up life for the cause of religion, so far from being virtue, the highest pitch of virtue, would be directly vicious; because it would be throwing away our existence for an absolute nothing. Annihilate the reality of a future state; and Christianity is a delusion; consequently not to be suffered for.

There is, there must be, hereafter a state, in which the present irregularities shall be rectified; and defects supplied; in which vice and folly shall universally, by established laws of the Divine oeconomy, sink to disgrace and punishment, and wisdom and virtue of course rise universally triumphant, and prevail throughout the universe. For it cannot be but that what is suitable to the character of the universal Governor, should have the advantage, upon the whole, in a world, of which he is the absolute and irresistible Lord, and that what opposes perfect rectitude armed with omnipotence, must sooner or later be crushed before him. For he does in the armies of heaven,  
and

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and among the inhabitants of the earth, whatever seems to him good, and none can stay his hand.

The virtuous and pious soul has, above all, such evidence for its own immortality, as it cannot doubt. Purified from every sordid desire, purged from every dreg of earth, and become wholly spiritual and angelic; whose prospects are large, whose views sublime, and whose disposition godlike; such a soul already feels her own immortality. Whilst in the body, she is sensible of her own independence upon the body, and superiority to it. While chained to flesh, and imprisoned in clay, she feels within herself celestial vigor, declaring her nobler origin. Attracted by the Divine influence, which in degenerate spirits is clogged and overpowered by sensual appetite and sordid passion, she raises her desires to that better world, for which she was formed. She pants for liberty; she breathes after that state of heavenly light and real life, which suits her noble powers, and elevated disposition; she spreads her impatient wing; she plumes herself for flight; she darts her angelic eye as it were athwart eternity; her vast imagination already grasps futurity; she leaves behind, in thought, this lessening speck of matter, and all its vanities; she hangs upon the verge of time, and only waits the powerful call, which spoke her into being, to seize the future world, the glories of the resurrection, to leave these lower regions, and expatiate at large

large through boundless space, to view the immensity of nature, and to soar with choirs of seraphim, to present herself before the eternal throne.

## S E C T. IV.

*Reasonableness and Necessity of the Connexion between the Behaviour of moral Agents and their Happiness. Discipline the only means for bringing moral Agents voluntariness to pursue Virtue.*

**H**AVING already seen, that it was necessary to the very idea of a perfect system, that there should be a proper subordination, a scale, rising by easy and just degrees, of the various ranks of creatures; it is evident, that there must have been such a creature as man, that is, a species to fill the place which he possesses. And it is plain, that as his place is immediately above the brute, and below the angelic nature, he could not possibly have been formed otherwise than he is. He could not be superior to the animal rank, without having powers and faculties superior to theirs. It is that which gives him his superiority over them. Nor could he have been inferior to the angelic order of beings, without falling short of their powers and faculties. It is the very thing which places him beneath them. Man, or whatever creature should have been made to fill up the chasm between the angelic and the animal natures, must have been exactly

exactly what we find our species actually is. For without such a rank as man, the moral system could not have been perfect, consequently could not have been at all : for it is impossible, that an absolutely perfect Author should produce an imperfect work. So that there is no room left to complain, that by creating man in such a station it was necessary he should be endowed with nobler powers and faculties than the brutes, he comes to be put in a more elevated and more precarious state. It is true, that very few of the brutes are likely to fall short of the happiness destined for them, having, as already observed, but few chances of missing of it, and being more effectually confined to the track appointed them, than it was proper such a creature as man should be. But is not the immense superiority of happiness to which a human mind may, with proper attention, rise, a very great over-balance for all the disadvantages our species labours under, were there a thousand for one ? Would any man, who had his choice before-hand, whether he would be of the human or the brute species, deliberately choose the latter, in which he knew it was impossible he should ever attain any considerable degree of perfection and happiness, rather than the former, in which he was sure, if he was not wanting to himself, he might rise to greatness and felicity inconceivable ? Would any rational creature make this absurd choice merely upon the consideration, that if he was of a species endowed with

with liberty, it was possible he might be so foolish as to neglect his own interest, and with open eyes run into ruin and misery? What no reasonable being would choose, let not presumptuous man blame his Maker for not putting in his choice. If man is what he ought to be, and is placed where he ought to be, what has he to do, but to think of filling his station with such propriety as is necessary for a reasonable being to study, who is desirous of attaining his own perfection and happiness in the only way in which they are attainable?

If the perfect concurrence of reasonable beings, as well as others, with the Divine scheme, was necessary to the very notion of a regular universal system, with an universal Governor at the head of it; it was to be expected, that the final happiness of such beings as should study to conform themselves habitually in disposition and practice to the Divine scheme, should by the positive ordination of the Ruler of the world be closely connected with their character and behaviour. And if it be impossible to conceive a plan of universal oeconomy laid by an universal and perfect mind, that should not be suitable to his own necessary nature and character, but founded in mere arbitrary will; it is likewise impossible to conceive a system in which the habitual conformity of reasonable beings to the grand scheme of the universal Governor should not naturally, and as it were of itself, produce happiness. The Divine  
scheme

scheme of government is founded, not in arbitrary will; but in the eternal and unchangeable rectitude of the Divine nature. And therefore it was as much an impossibility that it should be contrary to what it is, or that conformity to it should finally produce any thing but happiness, or irregularity any thing but misery; as that the Divine nature, which is necessarily what it is, should have been otherwise. So that, till the time comes, when universal regularity shall have the same natural tendency to promote order, perfection, and happiness, as universal conformity to the scheme of the universe; when the Divine will comes to be directly contrary to all the moral perfections of his nature, till impossibilities become possible, and direct contradictions the same; till the time comes, when all these shall happen, there can be no chance for the happiness of any reasoning being, who does not study to conform his disposition and practice to the general scheme of the Ruler of the world.

Let daring impious man hear this and tremble.

That there is a rectitude in conduct, which is independent upon any connected happiness, seems so evident, that one would wonder how some writers have persuaded themselves, and laboured to persuade others, That the only good, or rectitude of an action, is its tendency to produce happiness. After what I have said to shew the natural, as well as judicial connexion between virtue and happiness, I must declare, that to me it appears  
evident,

evident, That rectitude is prior to, and independent upon, all tendency to produce happiness. To prove this very briefly, let it be proposed to a person, that he have his choice to perform some noble action, such as delivering his country, by one of two methods, the former of which shall oblige him to make use of a piece of dissimulation, which shall hurt no creature, but if he chooses the latter, he may save his country without the least deviation from truth. Ought a man of integrity to hesitate one moment which of the two methods he would choose? And does not the preference of the latter to the former, the consequences of both being the same, shew plainly a rectitude in mere veracity, independent of its producing happiness? Again, were a traveller to see some strange sight, which never had been, or could be seen, by any other, would it not be evidently better that he gave an account of it on his return, exactly in every circumstance as it really was, than that he should in the smallest circumstance deviate from truth; though such deviation should have no kind of effect upon any person in the world? Farther, is it not certain, beyond all possibility of doubt, that the Supreme Being acts always from the greatest and best motives, and according to the wisest and most perfect rules, at the same time that his happiness is, has been, and will be, necessarily, at all moments, from eternity to eternity, the same, unchangeable, and absolutely perfect. Is the whole rectitude of  
created



created beings the pursuit of happiness? And is there no foundation for Divine rectitude? Is it not rectitude in a prince, or a father, to wish the happiness of his people, or children, without regard to his own happiness? Is not benevolence the more truly commendable for its being disinterested? Whereas, upon the scheme of placing the whole of rectitude in pursuing the greatest happiness, it ought to be quite the reverse. Ought not a good man to do what is right, rather than the contrary, if he were sure, that himself and the whole universe were to be annihilated the next moment, so that it would be impossible that any degree of happiness should be the consequence?

There is plainly an independent rectitude, or goodness, in the conduct of moral agents, separate from the connexion between virtue and happiness. And this is the foundation of the necessity of their acting according to a certain fixed course; and consequently of their having laws and rules promulgated to them by the universal Governor. Nor does this at all invalidate the connexion between virtue and happiness; but on the contrary, shews that there is, and ought to be, such a connexion. And, generally speaking, there is no safer way to try the moral excellence or turpitude of actions, than by considering the natural consequences of their being universally practised. For example, let it be supposed a questionable point, Whether the murder of the  
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innocent is in itself right, or otherwise. Try it by the consequences, which must follow the universal practice of destroying all the good and virtuous part of mankind; and it immediately appears to be so far from right, that nothing can be conceived more contrary to rectitude. On the other hand, let it be disputed, Whether the protection and preservation of the innocent be right. Let it be considered, what would be the consequences of innocence's being universally preserved and protected; and it appears evident beyond all possibility of doubt, that nothing is more agreeable to rectitude. Rectitude, therefore, does not consist in the pursuit of happiness; nor does the happiness, consequent upon a certain course of conduct, constitute the rectitude of such conduct. The true state of the case is, Certain actions are first in themselves right, and then happiness is the natural and judicial consequence of them.

In order to bring mankind to a complete and perfect concurrence with the universal scheme, it was plainly necessary, that other means should be used than force, or instinct, the first of which was sufficient for working dead matter, and the second, the animal creation, to the Divine purpose. Had man been only inanimate matter, nothing more would have been necessary, than that he should be acted upon. Had he been a machine; a weight, or a spring, would have been sufficient to make him perform his motions. Were there nothing in man but the mere animal

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powers, were he capable of being wrought to nothing higher than the animal functions, were his nature fit for no higher happiness, than those of eating and drinking, and, after living a few years, and leaving behind him a successor to fill his place, and continue the species, to pass out of existence; were this the case, there would have needed no very grand apparatus to make him fill his inconsiderable place, so as to contribute his small share to the happiness of the whole, and to secure his own mean portion. But it is very much otherwise, as will immediately appear. I believe hardly any one will deny, that man (or however most of the species) are endowed with the faculty of understanding; by which, though weak indeed and narrow at present, our species are yet capable of distinguishing truth from falsehood, in all points of importance, and with sufficient certainty, as shewn above. Now, in order to a creature's acting properly its part, and concurring with the whole, it is evidently necessary, that it make a proper use and application of every one of its faculties. No one will pretend, I think, that the perfection and happiness of the universe would be as universally promoted by every individual's making a wrong use of his faculties, as a right one; but on the contrary, that every individual's making an improper use of his faculties would produce the most consummate disorder and imperfection in the system, and would be the most opposite to the

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the Divine scheme, that could be imagined. It follows, that, if man is endowed with understanding, he is to be brought to cultivate and inform it, not to stifle and blind it; to endeavour to enlarge, not to narrow it; to apply it to the searching out of useful and important truth, not to mislead it into the belief of falsehoods, nor to employ it upon objects unworthy of it.

Another leading faculty in the human mind is will. That there is in man a faculty of will, or a power of choosing and refusing, we shall see established immediately. What I have to say at present is, That in order to man's concurrence with the universal scheme, it is necessary, that he regulate his will properly, or in such a manner, that he may will or desire whatever is for the general good, and will or desire nothing that may be generally prejudicial. No man, I think, will pretend, that it would be better if the wills of all created beings were set to thwart the general scheme, than that they were formed to concur with it; but, on the contrary, it is evident, that a general opposition of all beings to what is the nature of things, and the right upon the whole, must produce universal confusion, and that if there was no way to bring about this general concurrence, it were reasonable to expect, from the absolutely perfect rectitude of the supreme Governor of the world, that an universe of such perverse and unruly beings should be utterly destroyed, or rather never have been produced. It is

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plain, then, that, in order to man's acting his part, and concurring with the general scheme, he must be brought to use all the faculties of his mind properly.

I promised above to bring some proofs for the fact of man's being a creature endowed with will, or freedom to desire, and power to determine himself in favour of, or against any particular object. The certainty of this fact is founded in sensation, and confirmed by reasoning. Let any man observe what passes in his own mind, and he will be obliged to own, that he feels he has it in his power to will, or desire, and determine himself in favour of, or against any particular object. We have no other proof for our existence, nor is it in its nature capable of any other, than that we feel we exist.

But because the reality of human liberty has been cavilled at by some men of metaphysical heads, who have run into greater difficulties to avoid less, it may be worth while to consider this matter a little. I know not whether I am made like the rest of mankind. But I can feel every thing pass in my mind, that I can conceive I should feel, if I was really a free agent. For example, in an indifferent case: When I look on my watch, to know whether it is time for me to give over writing, and I find the hour come, when I usually give over, I do not find that I am impelled to lay down my pen, in the same manner as the index of my watch is moved to point  
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at the hour; but that I give over, because I think, upon the whole, it is more proper, I should give over, than go on. Does my watch point to the hour, because it thinks upon the whole, it is more proper that it should point to that hour than any other? If so, then the watch and I are beings of the same sort, endowed with much the same powers and faculties. Do I not lay aside my pen, because I choose to lay it aside, that is, because I am willing to lay it aside? Should I give over, if I was unwilling to give over? If I find my usual time past, and yet should be glad to finish the head I am upon, before I lay aside my pen, does that motive act upon me, and force me to go on, as a spring acts upon a watch, or does it act as a consideration upon a rational creature?

Again, suppose I am tempted to do a bad action, do the motives laid in my way force my compliance? Do I not, on the contrary, feel that I yield to them, because I choose to seize a present object, which I expect to yield me some fancied advantage? Do I not feel in my own mind a violent struggle between the considerations of present profit or pleasure, and those of wisdom and virtue? Is it possible I should feel any such struggle if I was not free? Does any such thing pass in a machine? Do I not find, that I sometimes yield to temptations, which at other times I get the better of? Have not others resisted temptations which have proved too hard for me? Could these differences happen, if they and I

were machines? Do not these instances of temptations conquered, fix both liberty and guilt upon me, in having yielded to what it was plain I might have resisted at one time, if I did at another? If it is extremely difficult, or what may be called next to impossible, to resist all sorts of temptations at all times, does this prove any thing else, than that human nature is weak? Were man a machine, he must act as a machine, uniformly and invariably.

What I have here remarked upon the case of being tempted to a bad action, is applicable, *mutatis mutandis*, to that of an opportunity of doing a good one. Motives, according as they appear, will influence a rational mind. But the appearance of motives to our minds, as well as their influence over us, depends very much upon ourselves. If I am prevailed on by motives, do motives force me? Do I not yield to them, because I choose to yield to them? If this is not being free, what is freedom? What should I feel pass in my mind, if I was really free? What may we suppose superior beings, what may we suppose the Supreme himself to feel in his infinite mind? Does he (with profound reverence be it spoken) does he act without regard to motives? Does he act contrary to reasonable motives? Can we suppose him uninfluenced by proper motives? Can we suppose he feels himself to be wholly uninfluenced by reasonable and important considerations? Would we be more free than the most perfect of all beings? If he gives us liberty and  
power

power to a proper extent, what would we have more ? If we feel that we have such liberty, why should we, contrary to possibility, endeavour to bring ourselves to doubt of our having it ? If we cannot doubt of our being free creatures, what have we more to think of, than how to make a proper use of our liberty, how to get our wills formed to a perfect concurrence with the grand scheme of the Governor of the universe, so that we may behave properly within our sphere, which if we and all other moral agents did, every part must be properly acted, every sphere properly filled, and universal regularity, perfection, and happiness be the result.

Some have imagined that allowing liberty or will to created beings was a derogation from the Supreme, to whom alone the privilege of freedom ought to be ascribed. It is certain that this is strictly true of absolute, independent, original freedom. As it is undoubted that independent, necessary, or natural existence is the incommunicable privilege of the First cause. But, as we find a limited, dependent existence may be, and actually is, communicated to created beings, where is the difficulty or impropriety of supposing a limited, independent freedom, or power of choosing or refusing, communicated to created beings. As created beings depend on the Supreme for their existence, and yet the existence they enjoy is a real and proper existence ; so may the liberty they enjoy, of choosing or refusing, be a real and proper liberty, and yet derived from, and dependent on the infinite Giver of every gift.



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If there is no such thing as liberty, in any created being, as some have imagined, then it is evident, there can be no will but that of the Supreme Being: for liberty, or a power of choosing or refusing, is only another term for will. Will, or willingness, implies freedom in the very term. Therefore, the common term free-will is a tautology, as much as if one should say voluntary will. There neither is, nor can be, any will but free will. Constraint, or force, is the very opposite of will, or willingness. Let it be considered then, what the consequence must be of affirming that there is no will, but the Supreme. We find in history, that a monster of an emperor wished that the whole *Roman* people had but one neck, that he might cut them all off at once. The same temper, which led him to desire the destruction of his people, of whom he ought to have been the father and protector, would have inclined him to wish the destruction of whatever opposed him, that is, of all good beings in heaven and earth. Will any one pretend, that this temper of mind is agreeable to the Supreme will? Is it not blasphemy to imagine the Divine will to be against goodness? But if liberty or will in a created being is impossible, then what we call *Caligula's* will was really the Divine will; the destruction of all goodness was agreeable to the Divine mind! It is too horrible to think of.

I know, it has been said, that the perpetration of the most wicked action, that ever was committed,

mitted, must have been in one sense suitable to the Divine mind, and scheme; else it would have been prevented by his over-ruling power. In a state of discipline, it was necessary, that both the good and the wicked should have liberty, within a certain sphere, to exert themselves according to their respective characters; and the Divine wisdom has taken measures for preventing such a prevalence of wickedness as should defeat his gracious ends; so that it shall still be worth while to have created an universe; though every thing would have gone incomparably better, had no moral agent ever made a wrong use of his liberty. Nor is there the least difficulty in conceiving of the Supreme Being, as proposing the greatest possible happiness of his creatures, and of a wicked being, as Satan, as studying how to produce the greatest misery. Which two inclinations, if they be not direct opposites, there is no such thing as opposition conceivable. And if there is a will opposite to the Divine, there is freedom; for freedom is necessary to the idea of will.

It being then evident beyond contradiction, that man is endowed with liberty, or a power of choosing to act in such or such a manner, within the sphere appointed him by his Maker, it follows, that to bring him to act his part properly, or in such a manner as may the most conduce to the order, perfection, and happiness of the whole, such means must be used as are fit to work upon an intelligent free agent. Neither force, nor

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mere instinct, being suited to a creature of superior rank, fit to be acted upon by reasonable motives, it is plain, that nothing is so proper to lead mankind to a steady and habitual attachment to rectitude of conduct, as placing them in a state of discipline.

We find by experience, that we ourselves (and perhaps it may be the case of all orders of rational created beings in the universe) are not of ourselves at first strongly attached to any object, but what we are led to by instinct or constitution, in which there is nothing either praise-worthy or blameable. Some minds are indeed observed to be very well or ill-disposed, so to speak, in early youth. But the goodness of very young persons is generally rather negative, consisting in a temper fit for virtue, a soil proper to sow the good seed in, and free from any unhappy cast of disposition. As on the contrary, those we call unpromising children, are unfortunate through some deficiency or redundancy, most probably in the material frame, which proves unfriendly to the cultivation of virtue in the mind, which would otherwise spring up, and thrive in it, almost of itself. For virtue wants only to be seen by an unprejudiced mind, to be loved. But the proper notion of goodness in a moral agent, is a strong and habitual inclination in the mind, to concur with the Divine scheme, or to act on all occasions according to rectitude, arising not from irresistible, mechanical instinct, nor from mere  
negative

negative happiness of constitution ; but from clear and comprehensive views of the nature of things, and of moral obligations. In this there is a real and intrinsic excellence. And were this attachment to rectitude, on rational considerations, universally prevalent in all moral agents ; moral evil there could be none. How the most effectually to produce and fix in the minds of free agents this inviolable attachment to virtue, is therefore the point to be gained.

The Supreme Mind perceiving all things as they really are, and having all things absolutely in his power, can in no respect be biassed against perfect rectitude ; but must be more inviolably attached to it, so to speak, than any finite being, whose views must be comparatively narrow. And to speak properly, he is himself the basis and standard of rectitude. The mind of an angel, or archangel, must, in proportion to the extent of his views of things, be more strongly attached to rectitude, than that of any mortal in the present state. Yet we have no reason to imagine that such his attachment was congenial to him ; but may rather conclude it to be the effect of examination, habit, and gradual improvement. We cannot conceive of a mind just produced into existence, as furnished with inclinations, attachments, or even ideas of any kind. We have no conception of these as other than the effects of improvement. And we consider a mind at its first entrance into being, as endowed only  
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with the capacity of taking in ideas, as the eye is of viewing objects, when presented to it. So that we can form no other notion of the elevated degree of goodness, which those glorious beings have attained, than as the effect of their having passed a very long course of improvement. Nor do the accounts we have in revelation, of the fall of some of them seem so well to suit any other scheme, as that of their having been at that time in a state of discipline analogous to ours. Be that as it will, it is evident, that to such creatures as we are, with capacities and all other circumstances such as ours (and had they been different, we should not have been what we are, nor where we are) nothing but a state of discipline could have answered the end of producing in us the necessary attachment to rectitude or virtue. For this attachment or inclination could not have arisen in us of itself, and without adequate means.

## S E C T. V.

*The present very proper for a State of Discipline \*.*  
*Objections answered.*

**W**ERE we to imagine a plan of a state of discipline, for improving a species of beings such as ours for high stations, and extensive useful-

\* The Author would not, if it were to do again, draw up the following Section, altogether as it stands here, seeing, as he thinks, reason to change his opinion, in some points (none of them indeed of any material consequence) from what it was, when this book was written.

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ness in future states ; how could we suppose it conceived in any manner, that should be materially different from the state we find ourselves in ? What scheme could be imagined, likely to answer the purposes of planting in the mind of the creature the necessary habit of obedience to the Supreme Being ; of giving it an inviolable attachment to virtue, and horror at irregularity ; and of teaching it to study a rational and voluntary concurrence with the general scheme of the Governor of the universe ; what method, I say, can we conceive of for these noble purposes, that should not take in, among others, the following particulars, viz. That the species should be furnished with sufficient capacity, and advantages of all kinds, for distinguishing between right and wrong : That the ingenuity of their dispositions, and the strength of their virtue, should have full exercise, in order both to its trial, and its improvement : That they should have rewards and punishments set before them, as the most powerful motives to obedience : And that, upon the whole, they should have it fairly in their power to attain the end of their being put in a state of discipline ?

If we consider the present as a state of discipline, all is ordered as it should be. We enter into life with minds wholly unfurnished with ideas, attachments, or biases of any kind. After a little time, we find certain instincts begin to act pretty strongly within us, which are necessary to move us to avoid what might be hurtful, and pursue

pursue What is useful to the support of the animal frame ; and these instincts are appointed to anticipate reason, which does not at first exert itself ; and bring us to that by mechanical means, which we are not capable of being worked to by rational considerations. Nature has ordered, that our parents shall be so engaged to us by irresistible affection, as to be willing to undertake the office of caring for us in our helpless years ; of opening, and cultivating our reason, as soon as it begins to appear ; and of forming us by habit, by precept, and example, to virtue and regularity. As we advance in life, our faculties, by habitually exerting them upon various objects, come to enlarge themselves, so as to take in a wider compass. We become then capable of reasoning upon actions, and their consequences, and accordingly do, in general, reason justly enough about matters of right and wrong, where passion does not blind and mislead us. When we come into the vigorous and flourishing time of life, excited by our passions and appetites, without which, with the low degree of reason we then enjoy, we should be but half animated, we proceed to enter into various scenes of action. It is true, that innumerable irregularities and follies are the consequence. But without passions and appetites, we could not be the compounded creatures we are, nor consequently fill our proper station between the angelic and animal ranks. Here then is the proper opportunity for exercising our virtue ;

tue ; for habituating us to keep continually on our guard against innumerable assaults ; for watching over ourselves, that we may not be surprized, and fall before temptation ; or if we fall, that by suffering from our errors, we may be moved to greater diligence and attention to our duty, to a stronger attachment to virtue, and a more fixed hatred to the crimes which have brought such sufferings upon us. And though the necessary propensions of our nature do indeed eventually lead us, through our own folly, into irregularity and vice, it must yet be owned at the same time, that by the wise and kind constitution of nature, we have innumerable natural directions, and advantages, toward restraining and bringing them under subjection, and innumerable ill consequences are made to follow naturally upon our giving a loose to them. Which ought in all reason to lead us to reflect, that the government of our passions and appetites is a part of our wisdom and our duty.

Pleasure and pain, health and disease, success and misfortune, reward and punishment, often at a very great distance of time after the action, are made the natural, or at least frequent consequences of our general behaviour here ; to suggest to us the reasonableness of concluding that an extensive uniformity prevails through the whole of the Divine moral government, and that what we see here in shadow, will in the future state appear in substance and perfection, and that it not  
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only will, but ought, to be so, and cannot be otherwise.

If we consider the opposite natural tendencies and effects of virtue and vice, in the present state, we shall from thence see reason to conclude, that the former is pleasing to the Governor of the world, and the latter the contrary. The natural effects of temperance are health, length of days, and a more delicate enjoyment of the innocent pleasures of life. The natural effects of gluttony, drunkenness, and lewdness are disease and pain, disgust and disappointment, and untimely death. The natural effects of universal benevolence, justice, and charity, are the love of mankind, success in life, and peace in one's own mind. The consequences to be expected from ill-will, injustice, and selfishness, are the contempt and hatred of mankind, and punishment by the laws of nations. When we say such an effect follows naturally from such a cause, we mean, that it does so by the Divine appointment. For what is natural, is only so, because rectitude requires it to be so.

Now, if our bodily frame is so formed that its well-being consists in temperance, and that an immoderate indulgence of appetite tends to disorder and unhinge it; if the make of the human mind, and our social state in life, are such, that the social virtues tend to produce universal happiness, and all this by the constitution and course of nature, of which God himself is the Author; if these things be so, who is so blind, as not to  
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see in all this a moral government already established under God, even in this world, and going on to perfection? That we see in fact innumerable deviations from the natural connexion between virtue and happiness, and vice and misery; and that, through the perverseness, the wickedness, and sometimes the mere caprice of mankind, and the unnatural and disorderly state things are got into, it comes to pass, that the natural consequences of things do not invariably follow, is by no means an objection against the conclusion I have drawn from the state of things, as the Divine wisdom constituted them, any more than the possibility of resisting the power of gravitation, or lifting a heavy body, is a proof, that there is no such law established in the natural world by the Author of nature.

That we may not, by a continued course of ease and happiness, be led either to such arrogance and pride, as to conclude ourselves the lords of nature, and to forget that there is One above us; or to fix our affections upon the present state, which is only intended to be transient and temporary, not lasting and final; to answer these important ends, we are placed in the school of affliction, to be broke and tamed to obedience. That happiness too easily come at, and a constant series of success and prosperity, are by no means proper for such unprincipled and unexperienced beings as we are, is too evident from the effects of ease and affluence, which very few can bear

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without almost losing their reason. The scenes of madness run into by victorious princes, of which history is full; the pranks from time to time plaid by our nobility, and rich commoners, and the fate of whole nations, whenever they arrive at the pinnacle of greatness and riches, shew the absolute necessity of affliction to force us upon consideration, to put us in mind of the frailty of our nature and state, and to make us remember that we are under the government of One, who can raise or humble, afflict or relieve, reward or punish, as to him seems good.

That we may never lose sight of our duty, nor have it in our power to pretend ignorance; and to silence even the poor excuse of thoughtlessness, conscience, that ever-watchful and faithful monitor, is placed within the mind itself, to be always at hand, to judge of our characters and actions, and to alarm us with its stings and reproaches, whenever we do amiss. And there is no mind so gross and stupid, as not to feel at times some pangs of remorse. The very Cannibal has a clear enough sense of right and wrong, to know when he himself is injured, though he will not stick to injure his neighbour. This effectually fastens guilt upon him. And the lowest and most savage of mankind, who shall hereafter be condemned, will be obliged to own, that with all his disadvantages for knowing his duty, he might have acted his part better than he did.

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Not only conscience within, but every object in nature presents us some moral lesson. Tempests, thunders, and lightnings, from above, inundations and earthquakes from beneath; the sword, famine, and pestilence, in our cities; diseases, and pains, in our own persons, or those of our nearest friends and relations, and death on our right hand and on our left; what are all these, but awful and yet kind warnings from the tender and compassionate Father of mankind, who shews himself willing to give his poor unthinking, short-sighted creatures all possible advantages for virtue and happiness, that might be at all consistent with their nature as free agents, with their condition as beings in a state of discipline, and with the grand and universal scheme, which must be equitable, unchangeable, and uniform.

And, as if all this, and a thousand times more not mentioned, had not been enough, we are taught, that angels have a charge over us, to assist us in our trials, and to prevent our falling too shamefully; that the Divine providence watches over us, and suits our circumstances to our strength and ingenuity of disposition. And to crown all, the Ambassador of heaven, the image of Paternal Deity, and brightness of Divine Glory has descended to our world, and in our own nature shewn us, both by his example and his divine laws, what it is to live as we ought, and how we may infallibly attain the end of our

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being. If this is not doing enough for us, what would be enough ?

Thus it appears plain, that the present was intended for a state of discipline, and is very well adapted to that purpose. Nor does the actual failure and hideous ruin of numbers of moral agents, who will undoubtedly be found hereafter to have perverted this state of discipline for virtue, into an education in vice, prove, that the state was not intended for training them up to virtue, or that it is not properly adapted to that purpose, any more, than the amazing number of abortions, which happen in the natural world, proves, that the general design of seeds was not to fructify, and produce plants and animals. Naturalists shew us, that in some cases, millions of stamina perish, for one that comes to maturity. And, as we conclude every seed of a plant, or animal egg, was formed capable of fructification, so we may, that every moral agent was formed capable of attaining happiness. The great difference is, that in the natural world, the numerous abortions we have been speaking of, are the consequence of the common course of nature; but in the moral, of the fatal perverseness of unhappy beings, who willfully rush upon their own destruction.

Some have made a difficulty of conceiving how the wisest and best of beings, who must have foreseen, that great numbers of his unhappy, short-sighted creatures, in spite of all that should  
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be done for them, would obstinately throw themselves into destruction, and defeat the end of their creation ; some have puzzled themselves, I say, how to reconcile with the divine perfections of wisdom and goodness, the creating of such beings.

But what state of discipline for free agents can be conceived, without supposing a possibility of their behaving ill in it ? Nothing but an absolute restraint upon the liberty of the creature, which is wholly inconsistent with the nature of free agency, and of a state of discipline, could have prevented their acting in many instances amiss. But the all-bounteous Creator has effectually put it out of the power of the most presumptuously insolent of his creatures to arraign his justice. For, if he has given to every accountable being a fair opportunity of working out his own happiness ; if he has put into the hands of every individual the means ; placed him in the direct way toward it, and is ready to assist him in his endeavours after it ; if he has, in short, put happiness in the power of every accountable being, which he undoubtedly has, as shewn above ; he has, to all intents and purposes, done the same, as if he had given it to every individual. For he, who points me out the way to get an estate, or any of the good things of life, and who assists and supports me in my endeavours to procure it, he it is, to whom I am obliged for whatever I acquire in consequence of his advice, and by means of his protection and assistance ? Now, if

the beneficent Author of being has thus given to every individual such means of happiness, as it must be wholly through his own perverseness, if he misses it ; what shadow of pretence is there for cavilling, or what difficulty in understanding and vindicating the wisdom and goodness of the adorable Author of existence ? If we lay the whole blame, and with the utmost justice, on him, who, having an opportunity and means for gaining any secular advantage, put in his hands, neglects them ; if we should as much condemn the man, who, through obstinacy or indolence, has let slip an opportunity of making his fortune, as another, who through extravagance has dissipated one already in his possession ; if we should as justly look upon that person as our benefactor, by whose means we acquire the conveniencies of life, as on the immediate giver of a gift, what remains, but that we justify and adore the boundless goodness of the universal Parent of nature, who, by calling innumerable creatures into existence, by endowing them with reason, by placing them in a state of discipline, and giving them all possible advantages for the improvement necessary for happiness, has, in effect, put in the hands of every accountable being a felicity fit for a God to bestow ? And if every individual, that shall hereafter be condemned, shall be obliged to confess his sentence just, and to own, that he might have acted a better part than he did, the  
divine

## HUMAN NATURE. 101

divine justice and goodness stand fully vindicated in the sight of the whole rational creation.

For, what!—Must the infinite Author of existence (with reverence be it spoken) must he deny himself the exertion of his boundless goodness in producing an universe of conscious beings, of whom numbers will in the event come to happiness, merely to prevent the self-sought destruction of a set of wicked degenerate beings? Either there must have been no creatures brought into being, above the rank of brutes, consequently no happiness above the animal enjoyed by any created being, or freedom of agency must have been given. And what freedom is conceivable without a possibility of error and irregularity, and consequently of misery? But is not the happiness of one virtuous mind of more consequence than the voluntary ruin of a thousand degenerate beings? And is not a state, in which we have the opportunity of attaining an inconceivable felicity, if we be not inexcusably wanting to ourselves, is not this a state to be wished for by mankind, if they had their choice either to come into it, or not? As for those unhappy beings of our species, who, proceeding from one degree of vice and folly to another, shall, at last, come to be hardened against all good, what is the value of thousands of such beings in the estimation of infinite wisdom and rectitude, that their destruction should be thought a hardship? For what else are such degenerate beings fit? Besides,



we know, that Divine Wisdom has so planned out his universal oeconomy, that an inferior good shall, in the end, proceed from what was by wicked beings intended for ruin and mischief. The whole human species were originally formed capable of happiness, and every individual has happiness in his power. But as the Divine Wisdom, which perfectly knew the future characters of all his creatures, with all the circumstances they should be affected by, foresaw that numbers would come to deviate from the eternal rule of rectitude, it was proper that a secondary scheme should be provided, by means of which those free agents, who should not voluntarily yield the due obedience and concurrence with the general design, should by superior direction be forced to contribute to the greater perfection and beauty of the whole. Of this secondary part of the divine oeconomy, we can trace out some very considerable parts, as the following, *viz.* We know that wicked and cruel men, in endeavouring to root out truth, and sweep virtue from the earth, have ever been made, in spite of themselves, the instruments of their more general establishment. The whole race of persecutors of Christianity from *Herod* down to *Lewis XIV.* have so egregiously overshot themselves, as to be the very causes of the greater prevalence of true religion, which has given occasion to the well-known saying, That the blood of the martyrs has been the seed of the church. In more  
private

private life, it is notorious, that a very considerable part of the trials of the virtue of good men, arises from the wicked part of the species. And every trial, where the good man comes off with honour, serves naturally to establish his virtue, and to encrease his reward hereafter. The mere contrast between the character of the pious, the temperate, and benevolent man, and that of the blasphemer, the voluptuary, and the hard-hearted, sets off the former to the utmost advantage, and presents it to the general observation in the fairest point of view ; by which votaries to virtue are gained, and a horror at vice is raised in every considerate mind. And in the future state, what powerful effects may be produced by the fearful and exemplary punishments inflicted on those of our species, or others, who have degenerated from the dignity of their nature, and, as much as they could, defeated the end of their creation ; may be imagined by those who consider what extensive connexions between the various orders of being may hereafter come to be opened to our view, and that, as all moral and free agents of all orders are now allied, they may hereafter come to be united, and make one immense and universal society ; and whatever has been originally intended for usefulness to one order of moral agents, may at last come to be useful to all. Something analogous to this we have in the case of the fallen angels, whose ruin is mentioned in Scripture as a warning to us.

It

It has been said, Since the supreme Being foresaw, without a possibility of error, what would be the exact character of every one of his creatures, was it not to have been expected, that such of them as he knew would turn out wicked, and come to ruin, should never have been brought into existence, or cut off in the beginning of life? Our Saviour says of *Judas*, for example, that it had been better for him, never to have been born. How then, say they, came he to be born? Or why was he not removed out of life, before he came to the age of perpetrating the most atrocious crime, that ever was or can be committed?

Though I would not be the proposer of such presumptuous questions, I think it innocent enough to endeavour to answer them. And first, if we consider, that to infinite purity and rectitude wickedness is so odious as to render the guilty person altogether contemptible in his sight, we shall not wonder, that he does not (so to speak) judge it worth while to put him out of existence, but lets him go on to fill up the measure of his iniquity, and reap the fruit of his doings. Again, it is to be considered, that infinite wisdom intending to work out great and valuable ends by what is designed by his wicked creatures for ruin and mischief, may therefore think proper to suffer them to go on to heap damnation on themselves, and determine to make use of their self-sought destruction for the advantage of the more valuable part of his creatures. How the character of  
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one, who does not yet exist, is fore-knowable, we have no conception, though we find from scripture that it is so, in the case of *Judas* particularly.

On the seeming difficulty of reconciling with the Divine goodness, our being placed in a state perhaps more disadvantageous for virtue and happiness than that in which other orders of beings are created; a state exposed to such a variety of temptations, as renders it hard for beings, furnished with such moderate degrees of strength as we are, to get the better in the important conflict, on the event of which our eternal happiness depends; on this difficulty the following thoughts may serve to vindicate the Divine goodness, and to shew our condition to be extremely desirable, instead of our being hardly dealt with, as some have insinuated.

If our condition were such, that one single deviation from our duty would at once irrecoverably determine our fate, or that what may properly be called human infirmity should doom us to irreversible destruction, there might be some pretence for complaint. But if, so far from that, a faithful, constant, and prevailing endeavour to gain the Divine approbation, with watchfulness against temptations, and repentance for our faults, followed by amendment of life, be the means for attaining happiness; where lies the mighty hardship? Nay, I would ask any impartial person, whether it were more desirable to be put in a  
state

state of trial, in which there should be upon the whole fewer chances of miscarrying, but less allowance to be made in the final judgment for deviations; or to be in a state exposed to greater hazards, but with greater allowances to failures? Is it not the same thing in the event, how various the temptations in the state of trial may be, if the merciful allowances, made by the judge, be proportioned to them. And who can doubt that infinite goodness will make all possible allowances hereafter for those failures of weak and frail beings, which shall be found to have been owing to the mere infirmity of their nature, and the precariousness of the present state, not to daring impiety and presumptuous wickedness. And it will accordingly be hereafter found, that a competent number of our species have actually been able, under the greatest disadvantages, to attain such a measure of conformity to the Divine will, as shall, with the heavenly assistance, and allowances to be made for human frailty, be found proper for rendering them, upon the Christian plan, objects of the mercy of the Judge of the world, and capable of being raised to a state of happiness; which will shew, that the miscarriage of the rest was wholly owing to their own perverseness; and that they themselves were the whole cause of that destruction, which the others escaped.

Every one knows, that, with respect to the present state, exclusive of futurity, there is great  
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difficulty in getting through life, without some fatal misconduct, which may embitter, and render it unhappy. And very doubtful it must be confessed to be, whether a new-born infant shall get over the precarious time of youth, without being drawn, through rashness and thoughtlessness, and the temptations of bad company, into such a course of folly, as may effectually prevent his proving a useful and valuable member of society. Yet we always look upon the birth of a child into the world as a subject of joy, not of grief or complaint, and upon the untimely death of a young person as a calamity; because we take into our view the consideration of its being in the power of every person, through divine assistance, which is never wanting to the honest mind, to behave well in life, if he pleases, and we hope he will do so. The warrior is sufficiently apprized of the danger of engaging; a danger, which it is out of his power to ward off. Yet he longs to mix in the martial tumult; and engages with joy in the glorious strife. Why should man think himself hardly used in being placed in a post attended with occasional danger; but in which he must be egregiously wanting to himself if he miscarries finally? But if I should not choose a happiness attainable only through peril and trouble, but would rather, through sordid stupidity and inactivity, desire to decline existing upon such terms; does it therefore follow, that the infinite Author of existence may

may not oblige me, in spite of my obstinacy, or stupidity, to go through what he may judge proper for me, and necessary for his great ends? Has not the potter power over the clay? Suppose I should not in this life be convinced of my obligations to the Divine goodness upon the whole, does it follow that I never shall?

It has been asked, why the beneficent Author of being did not pursue such an effectual scheme in the moral world as he has done in the natural? It was, for example, the Divine intention, that the human and other species should absolutely be preserved as long as the world lasted. The two sexes are therefore engaged to one another, and to their common off-spring, by such powerful instinctive attractions as are found fully sufficient to answer this important end. Why did not our Maker plant in our minds such a strong and irresistible propensity to virtue, as would have effectually secured the universal happiness of the species? The answer is easy; viz. There is reason to believe, that, upon the whole, a very great number of the human species will, through Divine goodness, come to happiness; such a number at least, as it shall in the end appear to have been, to speak after the manner of men, worth while to have created the human species. But, to propose by mere instinctive attractions alone mechanically to draw free agents to the love and practice of virtue, is contradictory to the nature of the design. Because what is wanted, is  
not

not so much, that mankind, and other free agents, be brought to go, like machines, in a certain track, as that the rational faculties be formed in a rational manner to the entire love and habitual pursuit of goodness. This shews mechanical means to be improper alone for that purpose, though they may prove, as we find, useful helps; and that rational means are absolutely necessary for acting upon rational natures. And it is ever to be remembered, that as the inanimate world is made to concur with the Divine scheme in a mechanical, and the animal in an instinctive manner, so rational beings, if they concur at all, must concur in a manner suitable to their nature, I mean, in a rational, free, and voluntary manner.

It has likewise been said, why did not the scheme of the moral government of the world take in such a succession of continual interpositions, as would have effectually forced men to have been virtuous? To this may be answered, first, That miracles continued would soon be no miracles, and consequently would have no effects different from those produced by the common course of nature. And, secondly, That if Omnipotence were continually from time to time to strike offenders dead, it is to be questioned, whether abstinence from vice, and the forced practice of virtue, which would be the consequence, would be sufficient, in the nature of things,



things, to render moral agents capable of any high degree of happiness.

For, suppose it were affirmed, that there is a natural absurdity, or inconsistency, in proposing to bestow upon an order of creatures a very high degree of happiness, upon any other footing, than in consequence of their having passed with honour and victory through a state of probation; in which there was some difficulty and danger, tho' not unsurmountable; suppose it were alledged, that there is a necessity in the nature of things, that the happiness of all rational beings be proportioned and suited to their state of probation; who could contradict this, or shew the bare possibility how such a creature, as man, could, in a consistency with his own nature, and the Divine rectitude, come to such a degree and kind of happiness, as we believe to be intended for him, without such a preparation, as he is to pass through in the present state? If we judge according to what experience teaches us of our own turn of mind, which in all probability is universal, we cannot suppose the happiness even of heaven itself would prove a happiness to beings, who should attain it too easily. When a prince, educated from his infancy in expectation of the regal dignity, comes to mount the throne of his ancestors, we do not find, that it gives him any greater joy, than an heir to a very small fortune has in entering upon his estate. But suppose a private person unexpectedly raised from poverty, and even from

## HUMAN NATURE. III

from the fear of death, to an imperial throne, the transport of an elevation so unexpected, from circumstances so grievous, will be likely to endanger his losing his senses. It is to be supposed, that to a species of beings created in heaven, or transported thither they knew not how, it would in reality be no heaven. Nor is there any possibility of conceiving of an order of beings raised to a station of happiness, without passing through a state of trial, who should not be in danger of falling from it again, for want of having been disciplined to virtue, and in a rational, as well as habitual manner attached to goodness and obedience. So that trial and discipline seem necessary to be gone through by every species (I do not say by every individual) throughout the rational creation, sooner or later.

It has likewise been asked on this subject, how the justice of the immensely different fates of two persons, one of which proves obedient, and the other wicked, appears; since it may often be supposed, that he, who has actually proved virtuous, might, in more disadvantageous circumstances, have been overcome by the severity of his trial, and been a reprobate; and he, who, by the force of very powerful temptations, has been seduced, might, in circumstances more favourable to virtue, have stood his ground, and in the end come to happiness?

This seeming difficulty is not very hard to obviate. For, first, as to him, who comes to hap-

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pines, no one ever thought of injustice in the case of a benefit bestowed. And he, who is Lord of all, may, without question, do with his own what he will; he may give to one of his creatures such advantages as shall in the event produce the effect of qualifying him for final happiness. But the other, whose advantages were inferior, will not he have just ground for complaint? By no means. If the advantages, he enjoyed, were fully sufficient, he stands self-condemned for having abused them; nor could he in reason expect them to be more than sufficient, much less to be greatly above what was sufficient, and least of all, to be equal to the greatest advantages, ever allowed to any other person. Upon the whole, nothing is more evident, than that the being, who has actually proved obedient, by whatever means he has been brought to goodness, is, according to the nature and fitness of things, rewardable; and that the soul, which sins, does in strict justice deserve to die.

The case of that very considerable part of the human species, which is cut off in immature age, without any opportunity of going through any trial in life, seems, at first view, to lessen the force of what I have been saying of the necessity of a state of discipline, to form the mind to virtue. For what is to become of those, who die in infancy? Are they annihilated? Are they happy or miserable in a future state, who have done neither good nor evil? Or do they go through a state of discipline in their separate existence?

To

To what may be said on this point, I have the following brief answers to offer: First, what I have above said of the necessity of a state of discipline, must be understood to be meant of a species in general. Perhaps the circumstance of the bulk of a species's having gone through a state of discipline, may be sufficient for making such an impression upon the others, who happened to escape it, as may keep them to the steady practice of virtue in all future states. This may be the case; and yet it might be absurd to imagine a whole species raised to happiness, without at least a considerable part of them going through a discipline for virtue, and thereby being qualified to instruct their more unexperienced fellow-beings in the importance of keeping to their duty, and the fatal danger and direful effects of swerving from it. So that what was above said of the necessity of a state of discipline for every species of rational agents in the universe, stands upon the same foot, notwithstanding this difficulty.

But if every period of the existence of free agents be, in fact, a state of trial and discipline, in which it is possible (though still less and less probable according to their farther improvements in virtue) that they should fall; we may then conceive of the possibility of surmounting this difficulty by supposing that those of the human species, who do not go through a state of discipline in this life, may be hereafter made partakers of a lower degree of happiness (as we

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are in Scripture informed, that the mansions of future bliss are various) which may prove their state of trial, as the paradisiacal was intended to have been for our species, and the angelic was of Satan and his angels. And as *Adam*, and the rebellious angels, fell from a higher state than that which we are placed in, so may many of those of our species, whose first state of discipline may commence after this life is over, and after our world is judged, and brought to its consummation. If so, those of us who have past through this mortal life in such a manner as to be found fit objects of the Divine mercy, will have great reason to congratulate ourselves on our having passed the danger, and being more secure of our happiness, than those whom we are now apt to envy for their getting out of life so easily : For we know not what we ought to wish for. But He, who made us, knows.

If any reader should imagine, that I intend to establish any one hypothesis as the real account of this matter ; he mistakes my design. All I mean by what I have advanced, is only to shew, that the circumstance of a considerable part of our species's passing through no state of discipline in this life, does not invalidate the necessity of a discipline to be gone through by every species of free creatures, in order to their being effectually attached to virtue, and so fitted for high degrees of happiness and glory.

If

If after all that has been said, and more, which might be offered, if it were proper, there should remain difficulties with respect to the august oeconomy of the infinitely wise and good Governor of the world ; if such short-sighted beings as we are, should no way be able to reconcile the seeming contradictions, and surmount the supposed difficulties ; this is no more than might have been expected. We are, through the meanness of our faculties, ignorant of infinitely more particulars than we know, in all extensive subjects ; and we see but part of one scene in the immense drama of the moral world. But in what little we see, we observe a thousand times more than would have been sufficient to prove a wise and good government already begun, and going on to perfection. If therefore, we have any candor, or any judgment to form a reasonable deduction of one thing from another, we cannot avoid concluding, that what we do not comprehend of the Divine scheme, is of a piece with what we do comprehend, and that the whole is established upon, and conducted by, perfect and unerring rectitude.

The very circumstance of the difficulty we find in comprehending the whole of the Divine scheme both in the natural and moral world, while at the same time, we find we can enter into them so far, and see so much of wisdom and contrivance, is a beauty, and a proof that the Author is one whose ways are immensely above our ways, and his thoughts above our thoughts.

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Considering the superabundant care that has been taken for putting, and keeping us, in the way to happiness, I think it may be fairly concluded, that whoever is not satisfied with the Divine wisdom and goodness apparent in the conduct of the moral world, would not be satisfied with any possible degree of them. And it is only going on in the same way of finding fault, wherever we do not understand, and we shall at last take exception against all possibility of guilt and consequent unhappiness, and blame our Maker, if we are not brought into the world at once perfect seraphs; if this earth is not the third region of the heavens; if we cannot give ourselves up to the most sordid lusts and passions, and yet be prepared for, and admitted to the conversation of angels and archangels. But when weak short-sighted man has racked his narrow invention to start, or to solve, a thousand imaginary difficulties in the oeconomy of the infinite Governor of the universe, it will be found at last, that though clouds and darkness are round about him, yet righteousness and justice are the habitation of his throne.

S E C T.

## S E C T. VI.

*Wherein the requisite Concurrence of moral Agents consists. Our Species under a threefold Obligation, the first respecting themselves, the second their Fellow creatures, and the third, their Creator. Of the first of these, to wit, The due Care and Regulation of the mental and animal natures.*

THE requisite concurrence of moral agents, of whatever rank or order, or their conformity to the grand design of the universal Governor, which is the ground-work of universal harmony, perfection, and happiness throughout the creation, consists in their acting according to truth, rectitude, and propriety (in their respective stations, whether higher or lower in the scale of being, whether in states of discipline, or reward) in all cases or circumstances that regard either themselves, their fellow-beings, or their Creator. Whatever moral agent strictly and universally observes this rule, he is of that character, which we and all rational beings call good, is amiable in the sight of the Supreme judge of rectitude, and goodness; and it is as certain, that every such being must be finally happy, as that the nature of things is what it is, and that perfect wisdom and goodness must act rightly in governing the world.



What makes the duty of such poor, short-sighted creatures as we are, who are yet but in the infancy of our being, is likewise the grand rule which every angel and archangel in heaven observes. Nay, it would be blasphemy to think of the Supreme Governor of the universe, as conducting his immense and august oeconomy otherwise than according to the sacred rule, which himself has prescribed for the conduct of his reasonable creatures, and which is an attribute of his own infinitely perfect nature, I mean, immutable and eternal rectitude.

In what a light does this shew the dignity of human nature! What may we yet come to be? Made in the image of God himself! And taught to imitate his example! To what heights may we thus come to be raised? Would to God, we could be brought to consider our own importance! Did we sufficiently reverence ourselves, we should act a part worthy of the honours, for which our Creator gave us our being.

The rectitude of that part of our conduct, which regards ourselves, consists in the due care of our minds and our bodies, which two parts constitute our whole nature in the present state.

Our mental powers are generally considered under the heads of intelligence, and passion. The office of the first, to judge, and distinguish between what ought to be pursued, and what avoided; of the latter, to excite to action. Where these two capital powers of the mind hold each  
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her proper place, where the understanding is faithfully exerted in the search of truth, and the active powers for attaining the real good of the creature, such a mind may be properly said to be duly regulated, and in a good condition.

The proper exertion of the understanding is in enquiry into important truth ; and that understanding, which is furnished with extensive and clear ideas of things, and enriched with useful and ornamental knowledge, is applied as the Divine wisdom intended every rational mind in the universe should be, if not in one state, yet in another ; if not universally in a state of discipline, as that we are now in, yet in a state of perfection, to which we hope hereafter to be raised. And whoever, in the present state, is blest with the proper advantages for improving his mind with knowledge (as natural capacity, leisure, and fortune) and neglects to use those advantages, will hereafter be found guilty of having omitted an important part of his duty.

Having in the foregoing book treated pretty copiously of the improvement and conduct of the understanding, there is the less occasion to enlarge upon that subject in this place. Let us therefore proceed to consider wherein the rectitude of that part of our conduct, which regards the active powers of the mind, consists.

In general, it is evident, that the will of every individual being in the universe ought to be effectually formed to an absolute and implicit submission

submission to the disposal of the universal Governor, which is saying, in other words, that every created being in the universe ought to study perfect rectitude in all his desires and wishes. He who desires any thing contrary to the Divine nature, and will, or to what is right and good, is guilty of rebellion against the Supreme governor of the universe.

The passions, as they are commonly, but improperly called, of the human mind, are various, and some of them of so mixed and compounded a nature, that they are not easily ranged under classes. The following are the principal. Love, or complacency, or desire, whose object is, whatever appears to us good, amiable, or fit for us, as God, our fellow-creatures, virtue, beauty. Joy, excited by happiness, real or imaginary, in possession, or prospect. Sympathy, or a humane sense of the good or bad condition of our fellow-creatures; self-love; ambition, or desire of glory, true, or false; covetousness; love of life; appetites of eating, drinking, recreation, sleeping, and mutual desires of the sexes; mirth; anger; hatred; envy; malice; revenge; fear; jealousy; grief.

It is the whole soul, or whole man, that loves, hates, desires, or fears. Every passion is a motion of the whole being, toward or from some object, which appears to him either desirable or disagreeable. And objects appear to us desirable, or disagreeable, either from the real excellence our understanding perceives to be in them, as in vir-

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tue, beauty, proportion, and their contraries, as vice, deformity, and confusion; or from some peculiar fitness, or congruity between the objects and our particular make, or cast of mind, which is the pure arbitrary effect of our make; as in the reciprocal love of the sexes, and the antipathy we have at certain creatures.

Now the Divine will, the dignity of our nature, and perfect rectitude, unite in requiring that every one of our passions, and appetites be properly directed, and exerted in a proper manner and degree; not that they be rooted out and destroyed, according to the romantic notion of the antient Stoic philosophers. It is in many cases equally unsuitable to the dignity of our nature, that the motions of our minds be too weak and languid, as that they be too strong and vigorous. We may be as faulty in not sufficiently loving God and virtue, as in loving the vanities of this world too much.

Previous to what may be more particularly observed on the conduct of the natural inclinations or passions of the mind, it may be proper briefly to mention some general directions, which will be found of absolute necessity toward our undertaking the business of regulating our passions with any reasonable prospect of success.

The first preparatory direction I shall give, is, To habituate ourselves as early, and as constantly as possible, to consideration.

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The faculty or capacity of thought is what raises our nature above the animal. But if we do not use this noble faculty for the purpose of distinguishing between right and wrong, for finding out, and practising our duty, we had been as well without it. Nay, the beasts have the advantage of those of our species, who act the part of beasts; in as far as they are not capable of being called to an account, or punished, as unthinking men, for the neglect or abuse of the noblest of God's good gifts, sacred reason. It is dreadful to think of the conduct of by far the greatest part of our species in respect of inconsiderateness. Mankind seem to think, nothing more is necessary, to remove at once all guilt, than only to drown all thought and reflexion, and then give themselves up to be led or driven at the pleasure of passion or appetite. But how will those poor unthinking creatures be hereafter confounded, when they find the voluntary neglect of thought and consideration treated as a most atrocious insult upon the goodness of the Author of our being! And what indeed can be more impious, or contemptuous, than for beings endowed with a capacity of thought and understanding, to spurn from them the inestimable gift of heaven, or bury that talent which was given them to be used for the most important purposes of distinguishing between good and evil, and pursuing their own happiness, and then pretend, in excuse for all the  
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madness they are guilty of, that they did not think, because they cared not to take the pains?

If thought be the very foundation of the dignity of our nature; if one man is preferable to another, according as he exerts more reason, and shews more understanding in his conduct, what must be said of those, who glory in what ought to be their shame, in degrading themselves to the level of inferior beings?

Especially, what prospect does the present age yield, in which we seem to vie with one another, who shall carry pleasure, and vanity, to the greatest height, and who shall do the most to discountenance sober thought, and regular conduct? To determine of times and seasons, and how long a nation may continue to flourish, in which luxury and extravagance have taken place of all that is rational and manly; is what I do not pretend to. But I appeal to those who best understand human nature, and the nature of government, and who know the history of other states and kingdoms, which have been corrupted in the same manner, whether we have not every thing to fear from the present universal inconsiderate dissolution of manners, and decay of virtue, public and private. May heaven take into its own hands the reformation of a degenerate people; and give comfort, and more agreeable prospects, to those who bleed inwardly for the decline of their sinking country!

To

To return; let any person consider the natural effects which an attentive and habitual consideration of his own character and conduct are likely to produce; and then judge, whether it is not his duty to resolve to act the part of a reasonable creature. With respect to the conduct of his passions and appetites, let a man make it his constant custom to spend some time every day in considering the following points, viz. Whether he indulges passion and appetite beyond the intention of nature; whether, for example, he sets his heart upon gratifying the bodily appetites, for the sake of luxurious indulgence, or if he only consults health in eating, drinking, sleeping, and recreations; whether he gives himself up to anger upon small or no provocation; whether he sets his love wholly upon the vanities of life, or if he aspires habitually after something nobler than any worldly pursuit, and so of the rest. Let a man accustom himself to recollect every evening the miscarriages of the day in respect of his passions and appetites, and he will soon find, if he be faithful to himself, which are prevalent, and ought to be subdued.

Unless we can bring our minds to some tolerable degree of tranquillity and sobriety, we cannot hope to redress the irregularities of our passions and inclinations. What condition must that soul be in, which is continually engaged, and distracted various ways after pleasure, honour, or riches? If any irregularity, or redundancy, springs  
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madness they are guilty of, that they did not think, because they cared not to take the pains?

If thought be the very foundation of the dignity of our nature; if one man is preferable to another, according as he exerts more reason, and shews more understanding in his conduct, what must be said of those, who glory in what ought to be their shame, in degrading themselves to the level of inferior beings?

Especially, what prospect does the present age yield, in which we seem to vie with one another, who shall carry pleasure, and vanity, to the greatest height, and who shall do the most to discountenance sober thought, and regular conduct? To determine of times and seasons, and how long a nation may continue to flourish, in which luxury and extravagance have taken place of all that is rational and manly; is what I do not pretend to. But I appeal to those who best understand human nature, and the nature of government, and who know the history of other states and kingdoms, which have been corrupted in the same manner, whether we have not every thing to fear from the present universal inconsiderate dissolution of manners, and decay of virtue, public and private. May heaven take into its own hands the reformation of a degenerate people; and give comfort, and more agreeable prospects, to those who bleed inwardly for the decline of their sinking country!

To



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numerable different orders, all gradually descending from himself, the highest created nature infinitely inferior to his own original perfection. At a very great distance below the summit of created excellence, and at the very lowest degree of rational nature, we may suppose the all-comprehensive eye to behold our humble species just rising above the animal rank. How poor a figure must we make before him in this our infancy of being, placed on this speck of creation, creeping about like insects for a day, and then sinking into the dust ! Nor is this all. For what appearance must a set of such lawless beings as we are, make before that eye which is too pure to look upon evil without abhorrence ? How must we appear to perfect rectitude and purity, guilty and polluted as we are, and covered with the stains of wickedness, which are the disgrace of any rational nature ? Is pride fit for such an order of creatures as we are, in our present state of humiliation and pollution ? Can we value ourselves upon any thing of our own ? Have we any thing, that we have not received ? And does any reasonable creature boast of what it owes to another ? Have we not infinite reason to loath ourselves, and to be covered with shame and confusion ? And are shame and pride in any respect consistent ?

The few advantages we possess at present want only to be considered, to convince us how little they are to be boasted of. The whole of our bodily perfections may be summed up in two words,

words, strength, and beauty. As for the first, that is a poor qualification to boast of, in which we are, to say the least, equalled by the plodding ox, and stupid ass. Besides, it is but three days sickness, or the loss of a little blood, and a *Hercules* becomes as manageable as a child. Who then would boast of what is so very precarious?

As to beauty, that fatal ornament of the female part of our species, which has exhausted the human wit in raptures to its praise, which so often proves the misfortune of its possessor, and the disquiet of him who gives himself to the admiration of it, which has ruined cities, armies, and the virtue of thousands; what is beauty? A pleasing glare of white and red reflected from a skin, incomparably exceeded by the glossy hue of the humble daisy, which was made to be trod upon by every quadruped. The mild glitter of an eye, outshone by every dew-drop on the grass. Is it inherent in the structure of the human frame? No; strip off the scarf-skin to the thickness of a fish's scale; and the charming fair grows hideous to behold. A sudden fright alarms her; a fit of sickness attacks her; the roses fly from her cheeks; her eyes lose their fire; she looks haggard, pale, and ghastly. Even in all the blooming pride of beauty, what is the human frame? A mass of corruption, and disease covered over with a fair skin. When the animating spirit flies, and leaves the lovely tabernacle behind, how soon does horror succeed to admiration! How do we hasten to hide out of sight the

loathsome remains of beauty ! Open the charnel-house in which, a very little while ago, the celebrated toast was laid. Who can now bear to look on that face, shrivelled, and black, and loathsome, which used to be the delight of every youthful gazer ? Who could now touch with one finger her, whose very steps the enamoured youth would have kissed ? Can the lover himself go near, without stopping his nose at her, who used to breathe all the perfumes of the spring ? If beauty is a subject for boasting, what is matter of mortification ?

The accomplishments of the mind are likewise two, knowledge and virtue. Is there any reason to be proud of the poor attainments we can in the present state gain in knowledge, of which the perfection is, To know our own weakness ? Is that an accomplishment to be boasted of, which a blow on the head, or a week's illness will destroy ? As to our attainments in virtue, or religion, to be proud on those accounts, would be to be proud of what we did not possess : for pride would annihilate all our virtues, and render our religion vain. If our virtue and religion be not founded in humility, they are false and sophistate ; consequently of no value. And who would be proud of what is of no value ?

The pride of riches is yet more monstrous than any of the others. To turn the good gift of Providence into vanity and wantonness ; to value one's self upon what is altogether foreign and accidental,

cidental, and makes no part of merit, as not being the inherent qualification either of body or mind, nor any way valuable or honourable, but according as we use it; what can be conceived more remote from common sense; unless we reflect on the folly of those who take occasion to value themselves on their birth, and are proud that they can trace back a great many fathers, grandfathers, and great-grandfathers, whose virtues and vices belonged wholly to themselves, and are gone with them? It is amazing to think how poor a pretence is thought sufficient to support human folly. The family of the cottager is as antient as that of the lord of the manor, if it could be traced. And in every family there have been scoundrels, as well as heroes, and more of the former than the latter.

As pride was the introduction to all the evil that we know of in the moral world, so humility is the only foundation, upon which the structure of virtue can be raised. A submissive, tractable temper is alone capable of being formed to obedience. A mind puffed up with self-opinion cannot bring itself to listen to advice, or to yield to just authority. The wise man endeavours to attain such a knowledge of himself, that he may neither, on one hand, act a part unworthy of himself, nor, on the other, forget his present humble station, and presume on any thought or action unsuitable to it.

Before we can hope to go any great length in the due regulation of our passions or inclinations,

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we must resolve carefully to study, and thoroughly to master, that most useful of all sciences, self-knowledge.

It is not in schools, in universities, or in the voluminous works of the learned, that we must search for this most important branch of knowledge. He, who would know himself, must search carefully his own heart, must study diligently his own character. He must above all things study the peculiar weaknesses of his nature. In order to find out these, he ought to recollect often what particular follies have most frequently drawn him into difficulties and distresses. If he finds, that he has been often engaged in quarrels, and disputes, he may conclude, that the passion of anger is too powerful in him, and wants to be brought under subjection. If he recollects various instances of his behaving in a lewd, an intemperate, an envious, or a malicious manner, and that he has often had occasion to blame himself for a behaviour which has brought upon him the reflexions of the sober and regular part of people, it is evident, where the fault lies, and what is to be corrected. But conscience, and the sacred rule of life contained in holy scripture, are more certain tests by which to try one's character, than the general opinion of mankind.

Nothing is more common, than for a person's weakness to be known to every body but himself. Let a man therefore set his own conduct at a distance

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a distance from himself, and view it with the same eye as he may suppose a stranger regards it ; or with the same as he himself views that of another person. Let one endeavour to find out some person, whose behaviour and character comes the nearest to his own ; and in that view himself, as in a mirror. And as there is generally some resemblance between the characters of those, who keep up a long friendship, a man may, generally speaking, see his own likeness in that of his friend.

It will be of great consequence to you to know what character is drawn of you by your enemy, especially if you find several agree in the same. Enemies will help you, more than friends, in discovering your faults ; for they will aggravate what your friends will lessen.

Attend carefully to the general strain of your thoughts. Observe what subjects rise oftenest, and abide longest in your mind, and what you dwell upon with the greatest delight. You will by that find out what passion, or appetite, has the ascendant, and ought to be subdued. It is from the fulness of the heart that the mouth speaks. And from a man's eager manner of talking on certain favourite subjects, every one, who spends an hour in his company, finds out his prevailing passion, while he himself perhaps is, all his life, wholly ignorant of it. Lastly, whoever means in earnest to come at the true knowledge of his own weaknesses, let him listen,

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with the most sacred attention, to every motion of conscience. There is more meaning in her softest whisper, than in the loudest applause of the unthinking multitude.

Another direction of the utmost consequence to our setting about the due regulation of our passions, and indeed to our behaving in general in a manner suitable to the true dignity of our nature, is, That we reverence ourselves.

The effect, which a just and habitual sense of the grandeur and importance of our nature, and the high elevation we are formed capable of, would have upon us; is, To inspire us with sentiments worthy of ourselves, and suitable to the gracious designs of the Author of our being. This is very consistent with that humility which becomes us so well in our present condition. Humility is commendable: Baseness odious. Did men habitually consider themselves as formed for immortality, they would not so generally set their whole hearts upon the present life. Did they constantly keep in mind their heavenly original, and the end of their creation, they could not thus sink their very souls into earth. Did they often reflect upon the worth of immortal minds, they would not think of satisfying them with the gross and sordid objects of sense. Did they consider themselves as intended for companions of angels and archangels, they would not, by indulging carnal appetite, debase themselves to the level of the brutes. Did they duly reverence themselves, as  
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beings formed for the contemplation, and fruition of infinite Perfection, they would think it beneath them to place their happiness in the enjoyment of any thing created.

One general rule carefully attended to, and the judgment of our own consciences according to it faithfully followed, would make the whole conduct of the passions and appetites clear, and would prevent our falling into any error in indulging or suppressing them. The rule is, To consider, what good purpose is to be gained by the exertion of every active power of the mind; and to take care, that in the conduct of every passion and appetite, we have that end singly, and nothing else, in view.

I will therefore proceed to shew in a particular manner, how this rule is to be applied in the regulation of those of our passions and appetites, which have important effects upon our moral characters.

That motion of the mind, which we call Love, or Desire, tends naturally to draw and engage us to whatever is either in its own nature truly amiable and excellent, or which our present state renders it necessary that we should be engaged to. There is no danger of our loving God, or virtue, or desiring our own real happiness, too much. For these are proper and worthy objects of the best affections of every rational being, throughout the whole of its existence. The inclination, we find in ourselves toward such objects, is the



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pure effect of our having clear and rational apprehensions of their real, internal excellence; not of any factitious or arbitrary taste implanted in our minds, or any arbitrary fitness in such objects to gain our affections. No rational unprejudiced mind in the universe ever had, or can have, just apprehensions of the Divine perfections, and of the excellence of virtue, that has not admired and loved them. And the clearer the apprehensions, the stronger must be the affection.

To mix and confound together all the motions of the mind, and to range them all indiscriminately under one head, is reducing the whole philosophy of human nature to a mere jumble. Hunger or thirst, for example, are no more to be considered under the head of self-love, than anatomy under that of astronomy. The pure, disinterested love of virtue is no more to be called a factitious, or arbitrary inclination, as the mutual desire of the sexes undoubtedly is, than gravitation is to be called solidity or extension. The bodily appetites, improperly so called, are plainly factitious, and temporary: for we can conceive of a living, conscious, rational being, who has not so much as an idea of them; nay the time will come, when they will be wholly forgot by at least *some* of our own species. But is it possible to conceive of a living, conscious, rational being, who, if left to itself, free, and uncorrupted, should be able to avoid loving virtue, or could be indifferent to goodness, as soon as it became  
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an object of its perception? Again, the fitness between the appetite and the object is in some cases evidently arbitrary. Different species therefore choose different sorts of food, which, without that arbitrary fitness, would be alike grateful, or disagreeable to all tastes; so that grass and hay would be as acceptable to the lion and the vulture, as to the horse and the ox; and flesh as agreeable to the horse and ox, as to the lion and vulture. On the contrary, in other cases, this fitness is by no means arbitrary or factitious; but unalterable and necessary. A mind, to which apparent truth was no object; an understanding, which saw no beauty or desirableness in undoubted virtue or rectitude, must be perverted from its natural state, and debauched out of itself.

Our love to earthly objects may easily be carried to excess. For it is evident, that a very moderate attachment is sufficient, where the connection is intended to hold only for the present short life. As on the other hand those objects which are intended to be the final happiness of our being, ought to be pursued with the utmost ardency of affection. To pursue, with unbounded desire, an object, whose nature and perfections are bounded within very narrow limits, is a gross absurdity; as to be cold and indifferent to that which is of inestimable worth is contrary to sound reason. But to observe the general conduct of mankind, one would think they considered God, and virtue, and eternal happiness, as  
objects

objects of little or no consequence ; and good eating and drinking, pleasure and wealth, as alone worth the attention of reasonable beings. One would imagine they believed that the latter were to be the everlasting enjoyment of the rational mind, and the former the transitory amusement of a few years at most. What do mankind pursue with the greatest eagerness ? What are their hearts most set upon ? What does their conversation most run upon ? What is their last thought at night, and their first in the morning ; and what employs their minds through the whole day ? I am afraid, the objects, which engage their supreme attention, are of no higher a nature, than how to get money ; to raise themselves, as they very improperly call it, in the world ; to concert a party of pleasure ; or some other scheme of as little consequence. Now, if the present were to be the final state, this turn of mind might be proper enough. But that a being formed for immortality should set his whole affections upon this mortal life, is as if a traveller going to a distant country, should make abundant provision for his voyage, and spend his whole fortune by the way, leaving nothing for his comfortable settlement, when he arrives, where he is to pass his days.

Suppose an unbodied spirit, of the character of most human minds, entered upon the future state, left to itself, and neither raised to positive happiness, nor condemned to positive punishment ; I ask what must be the condition of such a being ?

What

What can be more deplorable than the situation of a mind, which has lost all the objects of its delight, and can enjoy nothing of what makes the happiness of the state in which it is placed? For, alas, there is no eating and drinking, no stock-jobbing or trafficking, no enjoyment of wine or women, no parliamenteering in the world of spirits. And in this world of spirits we shall all find ourselves before many years be gone. What then is our wisdom? Not, surely, to set our whole affections upon this present fleeting state. But to habituate ourselves to think of the eternal existence hereafter as the principal end of our being, and what ought therefore to fill up the greatest part of our attention, and to engage our warmest affections, and most eager pursuit.

That any being in the universe, should ever bring itself to hate itself, or desire its own misery, as misery; is impossible. Though a reasonable self-love, rightly directed, is highly commendable, nothing is more easy, or common, than to err egregiously with respect to self-love. Most people love themselves so very much, and in a way so absurd, that they love nothing else, except what is closely connected with themselves; and that they love more for their own sakes, than any thing else. That mind must be wonderfully narrow, that is wholly wrapt up in itself. But this is too visibly the character of most human minds. The true standard of rectitude, as to self-love, is, That every one love himself as God

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may be supposed to love him ; that is, as an individual among many. To the Divine mind every object appears as it really is. We ought therefore to endeavour to see things in the light in which they appear to that eye which comprehends the universal system. If we thus enlarged our conceptions, we should never suffer our whole regards to be possessed by any one finite object whatever ; not even by self. Nor should we ever think of preferring ourselves unjustly to others, or raising ourselves upon their ruin. For that is to act, as if a man did not consider himself as a part, and a very small part, of an immense whole ; but as the only being in the universe ; than which nothing can be more monstrous. If we loved ourselves as our Maker loves us, we should not think of being partial to our faults ; but should view them with the same eye as we do those of others. It is a great unhappiness, that we cannot root out of our foolish hearts this shameful weakness. Does it at all alter the real evil of a bad action, that it was I who did it ? Will a lie become a truth in my mouth ? Is not every man's self as much self, and as dear to him, as I am to myself ? And is the immutable and eternal nature of right and wrong to be changed by every man's fancy ? If I see injustice, falsehood, or impiety in another in the most odious light, does not a third person see them in me in the same manner ? And does not the all-piercing eye of Heaven see them alike in all ? If I am shocked at the vices of another

ther person, have I not a thousand times more reason to be startled at my own ? Those of another can never do me the prejudice, which my own can do me. The plague at *Constantinople* can never affect me, as if it attacked me in my own person.

The love of praise, or desire of distinction, is a passion as necessary to a thinking being, as that which prompts it to preserve its existence. But as this tendency, like all the others which enter into the human make, ought to be subject to the government of reason, it is plain, that no approbation, but that of the wise and good, is of any real value, or deserves the least regard. The advantage gained by the exertion of this universal propensity, is, that men may be thereby excited to such a course of action, as will deserve the approbation of the wise and good. But the love of undistinguishing applause will never produce this effect. For the unthinking multitude generally give their praise where it is least due, and overlook real merit. One *Charles of Sweden*, or *Lewis of France*, the common furies of the world, shall receive more huzzas from the madding croud, than ten *Alfreds*, the fathers of their country. So that the desire of promiscuous praise, as it defeats the moral design of the passion, is altogether improper, and mischievous, instead of being useful. The rule for the conduct of this passion, is, To act such a part as shall deserve praise ; but in our conduct to have  
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as little regard as possible to praise. A good man will dare to be meanly, or ill thought of, in doing well ; but he will not venture to do ill, in order to be commended.

The passion, or emotion, which we call anger, serves the same purpose as the natural weapons, with which the animal creation is furnished, as teeth, horns, hoofs, and claws ; I mean for our defence against attacks and insults. Cool reason alone would not have sufficiently animated us in our own defence, to secure us in the quiet possession of our natural rights ; any more, than it would alone have suggested to us the due care and nourishment of our bodies. To supply, therefore, the deficiencies of reason in our present imperfect state, passion and appetite come in, and are necessary to the human composition. And it would have been as much to the purpose, that the antient Stoics should have directed their disciples to eradicate hunger and thirst, as anger, grief, love, and the other natural passions. It is indeed too true, that in our present imperfect state we are in much greater danger of yielding too much to our passions, than of subduing them too thoroughly ; and therefore we find all wise teachers, and particularly the best of teachers, who came from heaven to instruct us, labouring to inculcate upon mankind the conquest of passion and appetite, without setting any bounds to the length they would have the conquest carried ; as knowing, that there is no need to caution

tion men against an excess on this safest side. And, with respect to the passion we are now treating of, if a person does not shew himself wholly incapable of being moved, if he does not directly invite injuries and assaults, by bearing without all measure; if he does but from time to time shew that he has in him too much spirit to suffer himself to be trampled upon; I am clearly of opinion, that he cannot exert this passion too seldom, or too moderately.

If we take the same method for coming at the true state of things in this, as in other cases, viz. endeavouring, as before directed, to get that view of them which appears before the all-comprehensive eye of God, we shall then see how absurd the excessive indulgence of this lawless passion is. To the supreme Mind we appear a set of infirm, short-sighted, helpless beings, engaged to one another by nature, and the necessity of our affairs; incapable of greatly prejudicing one another; all very nearly upon a footing; all guilty before him; all alike under his government, and all to stand hereafter before the same judgment-seat. How ridiculous must then our fatal quarrels, our important points of honour, our high indignation, and our mighty resentments appear before him? Infinitely more contemptible than the contentions between the frogs and mice do to us in the ludicrous antient poem ascribed to *Homer*:

But



But this is not all. Let it be considered also how the impiety of our hatred and resentment, must appear before that eye, which sees all things as they are. That the supreme Governor of the world should choose to vindicate to himself the privilege of searching the hearts, and of knowing the real characters of all his creatures, is no more than might be expected. Whoever therefore presumes to pronounce upon the character or state of any of his fellow-creatures before God, assumes the incommunicable privilege of Divinity. Now, every man, who hates his fellow-creature, must first conclude him to be wicked and hateful in the sight of God; or he must hate him whom God loves; which is such a piece of audacious opposition to the Divine mind, as hardly any man will confess himself capable of. Again, for a private person to take upon him to avenge an injury (in any way besides having recourse to lawful authority which is founded in the Divine) what is it less than assuming the authority of God himself, whose privilege it is to decide finally, either immediately, or by those whom he has authorized for that purpose?

Farther, let the effects of this unruly passion, carried to its utmost length, and indulged universally, be considered, that we may judge whether it be most for the good of the whole, that we conquer, or give way to it. Experience shews, that every passion and appetite, indulged, would proceed to greater and greater lengths without  
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end. Suppose then every man to lay the reins upon the neck of his fury, and give himself up to be driven by it without controul into all manner of madness and extravagance: The obvious consequence must be the destruction of the weaker by the stronger, till the world became a desert.

Whatever is right for one man to practise, is equally right for all, unless circumstances make a difference. If it be proper that one man indulge anger without cause, no circumstances can make it improper that all do so. If it be proper, that one man suffer his passion to hurry him on to abuse, or destroy an innocent person, it is proper that all do so; and that the world be made one vast scene of blood and desolation.

People ought to be very careful in the younger part of life, not to give way to passion: for all habits strengthen with years. And he, who in youth indulges an angry and fretful temper, by the time he comes into years, is likely to be unsufferable by his peevishness; which, tho' not so fatal and terrible as a furious temper, is more frequently troublesome, and renders the person, who gives way to it, more thoroughly contemptible. The excessive strength of all our passions is owing to our neglect to curb them in time, before they become unconquerable.

When therefore you feel passion rising, instead of giving it vent in outrageous expressions, which will inflame both your own, and that of the

person you are angry with, accustom yourself to call reflexion to your assistance. Say to yourself, What is there in this affair of sufficient consequence to provoke me to expose myself? Had I not better drop the quarrel, if the offence were much more atrocious, than be guilty of folly? If I have lost money, or honour, by this injurious person, must I lose by him my wits too? How would a *Socrates*, or a *Phocion* have behaved on such an occasion? How did a greater than either behave on occasion of incomparably greater provocation, while he had it in his power to have struck his enemies dead with a word? True greatness appears in restraining, not giving a loose to passion.

Make a resolution for one day, not to be put out of temper upon any account. If you can keep it one day, you may two; and so on. To keep you in mind of your resolution, you may wear a ring on a particular finger, or use any other such contrivance. You may accustom yourself never to say any thing peevish, without thinking it over as long as you could count six deliberately. After you have habituated yourself for some time to this practice, you will find it as unnatural to blunder out rash speeches, as you do now to deliberate before you speak.

Envy and malice are rather corruptions of natural passions, than the natural growth of the human heart. For the very least degree of them is wicked and unnatural, as well as the greatest.

Emulation,

Emulation, out of which arises envy, is one of the noblest exertions of a rational mind. To aspire to equal whatever is truly great in a fellow-creature, what can shew more conspicuously true greatness of mind? What worthy mind ever was without this disposition? But to look with an evil eye upon, or to hate, that excellence in another, which we cannot, or will not emulate, is the very disposition of an evil spirit. For it is hating a person for the very thing which ought to excite love and admiration.

Some of the other excesses we are apt to run into in indulging our passions have to plead for themselves, that the exertion of those passions is attended with a sensible pleasure. But anger, hatred, malice, envy, revenge, and all the irascible passions, the more strongly they operate, the greater torment they produce. And it must be an extraordinary degree of virulence in a mind, that makes it choose to torture itself for the sake of exerting its spite against another. Which spite also, through the goodness of an over-ruling Providence, instead of hurting the person attacked, most commonly recoils in vengeance upon him who has indulged in himself so devilish a temper.

The natural inclination we have to sympathise with our fellow-creatures, to make their case our own, and to suffer a sensible pain when we think of their misery or misfortune, was placed in us, to draw us more effectually, than reason alone would, to endeavour to relieve them. It is there-

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fore evident, that this motion of the mind ought to be encouraged and strengthened in us, because we cannot be too much attached to our fellow-creatures, at the same time, that we ought to act chiefly upon rational motives in endeavouring to relieve the distresses of our brethren of mankind.

Fear is a natural passion of the mind, and ought no more to be eradicated than any of the others. A reasonable caution against, and desire of avoiding whatever would prove in any degree hurtful, is the prudent motion of every rational created mind. The conduct of this passion consists in directing our fear, or caution, to proper objects. To fear poverty, or pain, or death, more than guilt, to dread the misery of an hour, or of a life, more than future punishment for ages, is fearing a lesser evil more than a greater, choosing an extreme degree of misery for the sake of avoiding an inconsiderable one.

Though a dastardly spirit is, generally speaking, a proof of baseness of mind, it does not therefore follow, that to dare to attempt any thing, however unreasonable or unjust, is true fortitude. A bully, a drunkard, or a lunatic, will attack what a wise man will avoid encountering with. For the natural, or adventitious vivacity of temper in such persons, which is owing to bodily constitution, or intoxication by liquor, or to a preternatural flow of spirits, hurrying them on, and reason being in them very weak, or altogether insufficient for restraining their impetuosity,

sity, it is no wonder, if they run into the most extravagant and dangerous adventures, nor if they sometimes carry all before them. For the very notion, that a person, or body of men, are resolute to a desperate degree, renders them much more formidable to people who have not, or perhaps cannot, work themselves up to the same pitch. True courage is cool and deliberate, founded in a strong attachment to justice, truth, love of one's country, and of true glory; and is regulated and restrained by wisdom and goodness. True fortitude appears infinitely more glorious in the faithful martyr, who, unsubdued by want, and imprisonment, goes on, without fear, but without pride, friendless and alone, and in the midst of the insulting croud gives up his body to the devouring flames, in honour of God and his truth; than in the blustering commander at the head of his thousands, who marches to battle, and, in confidence of the might of his army, already assures himself of victory. And yet the latter is immortalized by the venal strain of flattery, while the former is passed over in silence.

The loss of some good which we have either enjoyed, or had reasonable hopes of attaining, or the arrival of some positive evil, is a reasonable subject of reasonable grief; and the concern of mind ought to be proportioned to the greatness of the loss, or the severity of the calamity which is come upon us. As for the afflictions of this present life, such as the loss of riches, of health,

of the favour of the great, of the good opinion of our fellow-creatures, of friends or relations, by removal to distant places, or by death; these and the like, being all temporary, we shew our wisdom most by bearing them with patience, or even, most of them, with indifference, in consideration of the prospect we have, if we be virtuous, of having all such losses made up to us hereafter; of being hereafter possessed of the true and unfading riches; of having the integrity of our characters cleared before men and angels; of being restored to our valuable friends and relations, and united to them in a better and happier state, where they and we shall be fitter for true and exalted friendship, and where we shall no more fear a cruel separation.

There is but one just subject of great or lasting grief, that I know of; it is the consideration of our guilt before God. That we ourselves, or others, should ever have offended the kindest and best of beings, whom we were, by all the ties of nature and reason, obliged to love, to obey, and to adore; this is a grief that will lie heavy upon every considerate mind. And, till that happy day comes, when all tears are to be wiped away, and all griefs buried in oblivion, the thought of our own guilt, and that of our unhappy unthinking fellow-creatures, ought not for any long time to be out of our view. Nor is there any degree of concern (inferior to what might disqualify us for the performance of the duties of life) too great  
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for the occasion. Nor can any thing be imagined more absurd, than for a reasoning being to express more uneasiness about a trifling loss or affliction, which, like all temporal distresses, will after a few years be to us, as if they had never been; at the same time that the consideration of those offences against the Majesty of heaven, which may have fatal effects upon their final state, raises no uneasiness in their minds. That a thinking creature (or rather a creature capable of thought) should fret for the loss of a mortal friend or relation, whom he always knew to be mortal; and be under no concern for his having alienated from himself, by his wickedness, the favour of the most powerful, the most faithful, and the kindest friend. That a rational creature should bitterly lament the lost patronage of a prince, or peer, whose favour he knew to be uncertain and precarious; and give himself no trouble about his having forfeited the protection of Him, upon whom he depends for every moment's existence, and every degree of happiness he can enjoy in the present life, and through all eternity! Surely such grief is indulged with great impropriety.

While we live in the body, it is plainly necessary, that we bestow a reasonable attention upon the body, for providing whatever may be useful for its health and support. To think of eradicating, or destroying the appetites, would be making sure of the destruction of the body. The



point we ought to have in view is, therefore, to conduct and regulate them so, as best to answer the wise ends, for which they were planted in our nature.

That every living creature should have in its make a strong desire to preserve life, was necessary. But in rational minds all natural instincts are to be under the controul of reason; the superior faculty to govern the inferior. It is evident, that there may be many cases, in which rectitude and propriety may require us to get over the instinctive love of life, as well as to conquer the influence of the other natural passions. Whoever loves life more than virtue, religion, or his country, is guilty of a gross absurdity, in preferring that, which is of less consequence, to that which is of greater. We are always to endeavour, as before observed, to view things in the light, they may be supposed to appear in to the all-comprehensive Mind. But I cannot bring myself to believe, that my life appears to the supreme Mind of such importance, that it ought to be preserved to the prejudice of sacred and eternal truth; that it is better, the people should perish for one man, than one man for the people.

If the heroes and sages among the Heathens, who had no such sure prospect of a future existence as we have, or may have; if they, whose views of a life to come, were rather strong desires, than well established hopes; if they shewed such a contempt of the present life, as to give it  
up

up with joy and triumph for the service of their country, and for the sake of truth; of which history furnishes instances almost innumerable; it were to be expected, that we should, in the contempt of life, greatly exceed them; which, to our shame, is far from being the case.

A competency of the good things of life being necessary for the support of life, it is evident, that a reasonable degree of care, industry, and frugality, is altogether proper; of which I have treated pretty copiously in the first part of this work. Whenever this care for the conveniencies of life proceeds such a length, as to produce a love of riches for their own sake, it is then, that a man shews himself bewildered and lost to all rational and judicious views, and enchanted with a mere imaginary object of no real value in itself. That a man should bestow his whole labour in heaping up pieces of metal, or paper, and should make his very being wretched, because he cannot get together the quantity he aims at, which he does not need, nor would use, if he had them in his possession; is much the same wisdom, as if he spent his life in filling his magazines with cockleshells, or pebbles. If it be likewise remembered, that every passion indulged, becomes in time an unconquerable habit, and that a fixed love of sordid riches is altogether unsuitable to the spiritual immortal state, for which we were intended; where gold and silver will be of no value; if it be considered, that a great degree of avarice is  
wholly

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wholly inconsistent with every generous sentiment, and even with common honesty; and that any constant pursuit whatever, which engages the whole attention, and takes it off from those sublime views of futurity, and those preparations for immortality, which are absolutely necessary toward our being found fit for that final state, is highly criminal; if these, and various other considerations be allowed their due weight, it will appear, that covetousness is a vice altogether unsuitable to the dignity of our nature, and that the safe side to err on, with regard to riches, is, To be too indifferent, rather than too anxious about them.

If the sole design of the appetite of hunger be, To oblige us mechanically, by means of pain, to take that due care of supporting the body by proper nourishment, which we could not have been so agreeably, and effectually brought to, by pure reason, it is obvious, that the view we ought to have in eating, is the support of life. That kind of food, which is fittest for nourishing the body, and the least likely to breed diseases, is evidently the best. And if artificial dishes, unnatural mixtures, and high sauces, be the least proper for being assimilated into chyle and blood, and the most likely to produce humours unfriendly to the constitution; what is commonly called rich feeding is, in truth, slow poison. It is therefore very strange, that men should have so little command of themselves, that, for the sake  
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of the trifling pleasure of having their palates tickled with a savoury taste, they should venture the shortening of their days. At the same time, that the enormous expence of a rich table might be spared, and the same, or rather indeed a much higher pleasure, in eating, might be enjoyed, if people would but give themselves time and exercise to acquire a hearty appetite. But I really believe that is what some have never experienced, and consequently have no conception of.

The vices we are in danger of running into, by which our table may become a snare to us, are, bestowing too great expence, or too much time at our meals, over-gorging nature, or hurting our health by a wrong choice of food. Nothing seems more evident, than that to waste or squander away the good gifts of Providence, especially in so sordid a manner, as upon the materials of gluttony, is altogether unjustifiable! The only rational notion we can form of the design of Providence in bestowing riches upon some, and sinking others in poverty, is, That men are placed in those different circumstances with a view to the tryal and exercise of different virtues. So that riches are to be considered as a stewardship, not to be lavished away in pampering our vices, and supporting our vanity, but to be laid out in such a manner as we shall hereafter be able to answer for, to Him, who entrusted us with them. And whoever bestows yearly in gorging and gluttony, what might support a great many families in in-

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dusdry and frugality, let him see to the consequences.

Again, if we be really spirits, though at present embodied ; it seems pretty plain, that the feeding of the body ought not to engross any very great proportion of our time. If indeed we look upon ourselves as more body than spirit, we ought then to bestow the principal attention upon the body. But this is what few will care to own in words ; which makes their declaring it by their practice the more absurd, and inconsistent.

If it be our duty to preserve our health and life for usefulness in our station, it can never be innocent in us to pervert the very means appointed for the support of the body, to the destruction of the body. We are here upon duty, and are to keep upon our post, till called off. And he who trifles with life, and loses it upon any frivolous occasion, must answer for it hereafter to the Author of life.

Lastly, if it be certain, that in the future world of spirits, to which we are all hastening, there will be no occasion for this appetite, nor any gratifying of appetites at all, nothing is more evident, than the absurdity of indulging it in such an unbounded and licentious manner, as to give it an absolute ascendant over us, and to work it into the very mind, so as it shall remain, when the body, for whose sake it was given, has no farther occasion for it. The design our Maker had in placing us in this state of discipline, was to give us an  
opportunity

opportunity of cultivating in ourselves other sorts of habits than those of gluttony and sensuality.

Of the many fatal contrivances, which our species, too fertile in invention, have hit upon for corrupting themselves, defacing the blessed Maker's image upon the mind, and perverting the end of their creation; none would appear more unaccountable, if we were not too well accustomed to see instances of it, than the savage vice of drunkenness. That ever it should become a practice for rational beings to delight in overturning their reason; that ever men should voluntarily choose, by swallowing a magical draught, to brutify themselves; nay to sink themselves below the level of the brutes; for drunkenness is peculiar to our species; this madness must appear to other orders of being wonderfully shocking. No man can bear the least reflexion upon his understanding, whatever he will upon his virtue. Yet men will indulge a practice, by which experience convinces them, they will effectually lose their understanding, and become perfect idiots. Unthinking people are wont to look with great contempt upon natural fools. But in what light ought they to view a fool of his own making? What can be conceived more unsuitable to the dignity of human nature, than the drunkard, with his eyes staring, his tongue stammering, his lips quivering, his hands trembling, his legs tottering, and his stomach

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~~Stomach~~ heaving. Decency will not suffer me ~~to~~ proceed in so filthy a description. The swine wallowing in the mire is not so loathsome an object as the drunkard; for nature in her meanest dress is always nature: but the drunkard is a monster, out of nature. The only rational being upon earth reduced to absolute incapacity of reason, or speech! A being formed for immortality sunk into filth and sensuality! A creature endowed with capacities for being a companion of angels, and inhabiting the ethereal regions, in a condition not fit to come into a clean room, among his fellow-creatures! The lord of this world sunk below the vilest of the brutes!

One would think all this was bad enough: but there is much worse to be said against this most abominable and fatal vice. For there is no other that so effectually and so suddenly unhinges and overturns all virtues, and destroys every thing valuable in the mind, as drunkenness. For it takes off every restraint, and opens the mind to every temptation. So that there is no such expeditious way for a person to corrupt and debauch himself, to turn himself from a man into a demon, as by intoxicating himself with strong liquor. Nor is there, perhaps, any other habit so bewitching, and which becomes so soon unconquerable as drunkenness. The reason is plain. There is no vice which so effectually destroys reason. And when the faculties of the mind are over-turned, what means can the unhappy

happy person use, or what course can another take with him, to set him right? to attempt to reform a confirmed drunkard is much the same as preaching to a madman, or idiot. Reason, the helm of the mind, once destroyed, there is nothing remaining wherewith to steer it. It must then be left to run adrift.

It is deplorable to think of the miserable pretences made use of to apologize for this beastly vice. One excuses himself by his being necessarily obliged to keep company. But it is notorious that nothing more effectually disqualifies a man for company, than to have his tongue tied, and his brains stupified with liquor. Besides, no man is obliged to do himself a mischief, to do another no kindness. Another pretends he is drawn by his business, or way of life, to taverns and places of entertainment. But a man must never have been drunk, nor ever seen another drunk, to imagine that strong liquor will help him in driving bargains. On the contrary every body knows, that one is never so likely to be imposed on as when he is in liquor. Nor is the pretence of drinking to drive away care, to pass the time, or to cheer the Spirits, more worthy of a rational creature. If, by the force of strong liquor, a man's cares may be mechanically banished, and his conscience lulled asleep for a time; he can only expect them to break loose upon him afterwards with the greater fury. He who artificially raises his spirits by drinking, will find



find them sink and flag in proportion. And then they must be raised again. And so on, till at last he has no spirits to raise. For understanding, and fortune, and virtue, and health, all fall before this dreadful destroyer. As for drinking to pass the time, instead of an excuse, it is an aggravation. It is criminal enough to waste expence and health, without lavishing precious time besides.

Nor is the pretence of being odious among one's neighbours, and being looked upon as a precise fellow, for living temperately, any better than the others. Alas! we are not hereafter to stand or fall by the opinion of our neighbours. Besides, we ourselves in many cases shew a neglect of the opinion of mankind; and do not cross our inclinations to gain it. And if in one instance, why not in another? We may be sure of the favourable opinion of the sober part of our acquaintance by keeping on the right side; the approbation of one of whom is preferable to that of a thousand drunkards.

Of all kinds of intemperance, the modern times have produced one of the most fatal and unheard of, which like a plague over-runs and lays waste both town and country, sweeping the lower part of the people, who indulge in it, by thousands to the grave. The unhappy invention I mean, and which seems by its mischievous effects to claim Satan himself for its author, is the drinking of fermented spirituous liquors. This is no place for setting forth the destructive effects of  
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that most shocking species of debauchery. That has been the subject of a parliamentary enquiry. And it is to be hoped, that the accounts laid before that august body, which were tragical enough to melt a heart of rock, will be the cause of producing an effectual remedy for that ruinous national evil.

The best human means I know of, for conquering a habit of drinking, are to avoid temptation, to accustom one's self by degrees to lessen the quantity, and lower the strength of the liquor by a more and more copious dilution with water.

The natural desire of the two sexes was placed in us for the support of the species. It is not therefore to be eradicated; but only brought under proper regulations, so as the end may the best be answered. That the union of one man and one woman for life, was the original design, is evident from the near equality between the numbers of the two Sexes. For one man therefore to break loose upon the other Sex, and appropriate to himself a plurality, is evidently against the order of nature, and inconsistent with the good of society, in which every individual is to enjoy all his natural rights and privileges, and all monopolies are unjust. That the marriage engagement ought to be sacred and indissoluble but by death, is plain from considering the various bad effects of its being precarious, as alienating the affections of the two parties for one another, and for

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their common children, and thereby defeating one main end of their coming together, viz. to be mutual helps and supports to one another under the various distresses of life ; encouraging inconstancy and an endless desire of variety ; and exposing one of the sexes to the unhappiness of a slavish dependence. That all commerce of the sexes, where a due care is not had for the off-spring, is vicious, is evident from considering, that thereby the very design of nature is frustrated. That invading the bed of our neighbour is highly injurious, is plain, because it is a breach of the most solemn engagements, and most sacred vows, without which there could be no marriage. That all commerce of the sexes, except in lawful marriage, is unjustifiable, is certain, in that it tends to the discouragement of that most wise and excellent institution. And that it is the indispensable duty of every man and woman to enter into that state, excepting in the case of unsurmountable constitutional or prudential objections, is as plain, as that it is the duty of every man and woman to eat and drink. For it is as certainly the design of Providence, that the species be kept up, as that the life of individuals be preserved by nourishment. And what is the duty of one is the duty of all, unless in the case of insuperable obstacles.

The indulgence of this appetite to excess is as clearly unjustifiable as that of any other. The effects of every undue sensual indulgence are sinking and debasing the mind, misleading it from

the sublime views, and noble pursuits, for which it was created, and habituating it to disobedience and misrule, which is directly contrary to the intention of a state of discipline. Whoever gives himself up to the uncontrouled dominion of passion or appetite, sells himself an unredeemable slave to the most rigorous, and most deipicable of tyrants. And it is only going on farther and farther in such base indulgencies, and at last, no gratification whatever of the desire will be sufficient. Yet, there is no state in life, in which abstinence at times, from sensual gratifications of every kind, is not indispensably necessary. Every reader's common sense will convince him of the truth of this, and particularly with respect to the subject we are now upon. Though marriage is the natural way of gratifying the mutual desires of the sexes, every body knows, that a continued indulgence is utterly incompatible with the marriage state. Which shews plainly that the due regulation and restraint of every passion and appetite, is the scheme of nature, and that unbounded excess is contrary to nature. And yet, how strange is it to consider the poor and superficial fallacies, which mankind think sufficient to satisfy themselves with, rather than give up their favourite vices and follies? What can be more contemptible than the common plea for all excessive and irregular indulgences, particularly the criminal commerce of the sexes; That we are formed with natural inclina-

tions, desires, and powers; and why should we not act according to the bent of our nature?

To pursue the ends of nature, according to the order of nature, is so far from being criminal, that it is virtue. But excess and irregularity are directly contrary to nature's views. This is seen by every man, in every case where passion and appetite do not blind him. We have a natural appetite, for example, to food. How comes it then, that we do not as often over-gorge our stomachs with plain bread as with dainties? The one would be as irregular and vicious as the other. Yet we should see a strange absurdity in the former, while we can excuse ourselves in the latter. If we are formed with a natural appetite for food, why do we make such a difference in the indulgence of our appetite in delicacies, from plain food? The truth is, that excess of all kinds is indefensible, and unnatural. If it were natural, we should be as apt to eat too much bread, as too much pastry. It is the deplorable weakness of our nature, that we yield to appetite and passion, till they become too powerful for us, and lead us captive in spite of ourselves. While we pretend, we only follow nature, we are indulging a false and vitiated taste. And in no indulgence is there more shameful excess committed, nor greater deviations from the intention of nature, than in that which is the subject of this paragraph. Were the above apology for excess  
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of any weight, that is, were it proper we should do every thing we have power or inclination to, we might by the same plea throw ourselves down a precipice, because we have power to do it. The thief may steal, because he has a natural desire to ease rather than labour; the drunkard may drink himself to death, because it is natural to quench thirst; the passionate man may kill his enemy, because he has a natural disposition to repel injuries; in short, if this plea be good for any thing, it renders all excesses, which take their first rise from a natural appetite, innocent.

Such an indulgence in sleep, in leisure or inaction, and in relaxations or amusements, as may be necessary for the refreshment and health of these frail vehicles we now inhabit, is allowable. And the just measure of such indulgence is different according to different constitutions and ways of life. But it is to be feared, that hundreds exceed the bounds of moderation, for one, who restricts himself too much. Let every reader lay his hand upon his heart, and think what lost time he will have to answer for hereafter. The safe side is, to indulge rather too little than too much. A tolerable constitution will hold better with eight hours sleep, in the twenty-four, than with more. And as to relaxations or diversions, the plea of their necessity is wholly groundless, except for those who live a laborious, or studious life. What necessity for those, whose whole exis-

tence is one continued course of indolence and relaxation, for relaxation? Relaxation from what? Not from business; for they never do any. The proper relaxation from idleness, would be to do somewhat. And there is no mortal, who is one degree above an idiot, that is not capable of doing something worth living for.

Whoever can persuade himself, that it was the intention of his Maker, in placing him in this state of discipline, that he should pass an existence as useless as that of a stock or a stone (supposing him innocent of all positive crimes) must have strange notions of the Divine œconomy, and of his own nature. If that sort of life be lawful and proper for one, it is so for all. And where would then be the business of life, the improvement of ourselves, the care of our children, the government of kingdoms, the advancement of the species toward a preparation for a future state of happiness? Let no one pretend, that he cannot find employment, till he has at least performed all that is prescribed in this book.

I will here throw together a few remarks on some of the modern fashionable amusements.

Gaming is an amusement wholly unworthy of rational beings, having neither the pretence of exercising the body, of exerting ingenuity, or of giving any natural pleasure; and owing its entertainment wholly to an unnatural and vitiated taste; the cause of infinite loss of time; of enormous destruction of money, of irritating the passions,

sions, of stirring up avarice, of innumerable sneaking tricks and frauds, of encouraging idleness, of disgusting people against their proper employments, and of sinking and debasing all that is truly great and valuable in the mind\*.

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\* Cards being now become so universal, as to be the nuisance of almost all companies, it may seem necessary in opposing the general practice of the polite, to support what is above said against card-playing by some authorities, which will, I believe, appear at least equal to those of any of the most eminent modern defenders of that stupid and mischievous amusement.

" Play, wherein persons of condition, especially ladies" [in our times all ages, sexes, and ranks] "*waste* so much of their time, is a plain instance that people cannot be idle; they must be doing something," [if it be mischief] "For how else could they sit so many hours *toiling* at that which gives generally more *vexation* than delight to people, while they are engaged in it? It is certain, gaming leaves no *satisfaction* behind it to those who reflect when it is over, and it no way *profits* either *body* or *mind*. As to *estates*, if it strike so deep as to concern them, it is then a trade, and not a recreation, wherein few thrive; and at best, a thriving gamester has but a poor trade on't, who fills his pockets at the price of his reputation."

Locke on *Educ.* p. 366.

And afterwards, page 368.

" As to cards and dice, I think the safest and best way is never to *learn* any play upon them, and so to be incapacitated for those *dangerous temptations* and *incroaching wasters* of *useful time*."

What would this great man have said, had he lived in our times, when it is common for people to spend five or six hours every night at cards, Sunday not excepted; which amounts to

M 4 a fourth



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As for the theatrical diversions, they are managed in such a manner, that a sober person may be ashamed to be seen at many of them. It is notorious that the bulk of our *English* plays are not fit to be seen in print. The tragedies are, generally speaking, a heap of wild flights and bombastic rants, and the comedies of scandalous impurities; neither of which can be thought worthy the attention of a people who value themselves either upon their taste or their virtue. There may be found, perhaps, in the *English* language, about twenty or thirty pieces, especially some of *Shakespeare's*, which, if subjected to pretty severe castigation, and properly represented, might be said to make a noble entertainment. But these serve only as traps to draw in the innocent and unwary to a delight in the diversions

a fourth or fifth part of the whole time of life, and comes in all to perhaps ten or a dozen years in a long life?

Let us now hear Mr. *Addison* on the same subject. SPECT.  
Nº. 93.

“ I must confess I think it is below *reasonable* creatures to  
“ be altogether conversant in such diversions as are merely  
“ *innocent*, and have nothing else to recommend them, but  
“ that there is *no hurt* in them. Whether any kind of gaming  
“ has *even thus much* to say for itself, I shall not determine;  
“ but I think it is very wonderful to see persons of the *best*  
“ *sense* passing away *hours together* in *shuffling* and dividing a  
“ pack of cards, with no other *conversation*, but what is made  
“ up of a few *game phrases*, and no other *ideas* but those of  
“ *black or red spots* ranged together in different figures. Would  
“ not a man laugh to hear any one of this species complaining  
“ *that life is short?* ”

versions of the theatre. And by the sagacity of the managers of the theatres, who very well know, that the gross of an audience have no taste for what is really excellent in those entertainments, and are only to be pleased with shew, or ribaldry ; by their cunning management, I say, it comes about, that it is not much safer for a young and innocent person to be present at the representation of a chaste and virtuous piece, than of one of the most profane. What does it avail, that the piece itself be unexceptionable ; if it is to be interlarded with lewd songs or dances, and tagged at the conclusion with a ludicrous and beastly farce ? I cannot therefore, in conscience, give youth any other advice, than generally to avoid such diversions, as cannot be indulged without the utmost danger of perverting their taste, and corrupting their morals.

As for masquerades, if the intention of them be intriguing, they answer some end, though a bad one ; if not, they seem by all accounts to be such a piece of wretched foolery, as ought to be beneath any but children, or mad people. That a thousand people should come together in ridiculous dresses only to squeak to one another, *I know you*, and, *Do you know me !* Posterity, if the world should grow a little wiser, will not believe it ; but will conclude, that their grandfathers and grandmothers were very naught. A multitude assembled together in masks, by which means shame, the great restraint from vice, is banished !

banished! What can be imagined more threatening to the interests of virtue and decency \*.

I know of no very material objection against the entertainments of music called concerts, if they be not pursued to the loss of too much time or money. Those called oratorios, being a kind of drama's taken from Scripture, are, I think, exceptionable, as they tend to degrade those awful subjects, and to turn into diversion what is more proper for devotion.

Promiscuous dancing at public balls, is a diversion no way proper for young people, as it gives an opportunity for the artful and designing of either sex to lay snares for one another, which sometimes prove fatal. At the same time, country-dancing in private, where the whole company are known to one another, where the parents or other judicious persons preside, where decency is kept up, and moderation used, must, I think, be owned to be both an agreeable amusement, and a wholesome exercise.

\* Among various other the immortal honours of our present most excellent Sovereign, George III. may this page hand down to posterity, that he has set his royal authority and example in full opposition to the vices here remarked on, viz. Masquerading, Gaming, and criminal Gallantry. And to the indelible disgrace of the present age, be it remembered, that, in consequence of the discontent of a set of disappointed grandees, the merit of so amiable a prince has not been esteemed as, from the known generosity of the people of Britain, might have been expected.

Hunting,

Hunting, the favourite diversion of the country-gentry, is, without doubt, the very best that can be used, for the preservation of health, exclusive of the danger of broken bones. But, as a gentleman ought in all reason to be possessed of other endowments and accomplishments, besides that of a healthy constitution, one would think, a few other employments should have place; such as reading, overlooking their business, improving their estates, serving their friends, and country, and preparing themselves for another world: for surely that cannot be said to be the existence of a thinking, social, immortal creature, which is divided between hunting, drinking, and sleeping.

The distress many people seem to be in for somewhat to pass the time, might have been prevented by their studying in the earlier part of life to acquire a little taste for reading and contemplation. Whoever can find an agreeable companion in a book, a tree, or a flower, can never be at a loss how to pass his leisure hours, though he should not be in the way of the card-table, the tavern, or the play. And it is well worth while to acquire a little taste for mental amusements in one's early years (the only time of life in which it is to be acquired) for when all is said, it is but a miserable case for a man to have in himself no entertainment for himself; but to be obliged to be beholden to others for all his pleasure in life.

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Our situation in the present state is such, that every thing makes a part of our discipline ; and we are in danger, without proper care, and attention, of deviating into error in so seemingly trivial a particular as that of dress. Too much time, or too great expence bestowed on dress, that is, more than might do the business decently, becomes criminal. For that is wasting upon an affair of very little consequence, what is of great value, and might be much better applied. Levity, or wantonness appearing in dress is also unjustifiable, as tending to produce bad effects on ourselves and others.

To conclude, the proper conduct of the passions and appetites consists briefly, In following nature in the indulgence of them ; in taking care, above all things, not to suffer them to get such a hold of the mind, as to enslave it, that is, to engage so much of its attention as may disqualify it for worthier pursuits, make it unhappy by continually hankering after the gratification of one low desire or other, and lead it to place its whole satisfaction in such gratifications. The due conduct of the passions and appetites supposes reason to bear rule in the mind, and the inferior powers to be in subjection. Whoever keeps his mind constantly in such a condition, is at all times in a capacity for acting a part suitable to the dignity of human nature, and performing his duty to his fellow-creatures, and to his Creator.

S E C T.

## S E C T. VII.

*Of our Obligations with Respect to our Fellow-creatures.*

THE foundation upon which the whole of our duty to our fellow-creatures must rest, is benevolence. And the measure of our love to the rest of mankind, is, its being equal to that which we have for ourselves. The reason why it is made our duty to love our neighbours as ourselves, is, That being proper, there should be such an order of beings, as man, created, it was impossible for Divine wisdom to propose the production of such a species, without intending them to be united together as a society; and that mutual love and agreement are essentially necessary to the very idea of a society. As it is impossible to conceive a material system, in which repulsion should universally prevail, and attraction have no place, but every particle of matter should repel every other, so is it inconceivable that a society should subsist, in which every individual should hate every other.

Our self-love is very wisely made the measure of our love to our fellow-creatures, because every individual ought to consider himself as only one among many, and no way of greater consequence than his neighbour, before the universal Governor, than as he may be more virtuous than he. And  
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as human penetration does not reach so far as to judge of internal characters, we cannot upon any rational pretence pronounce ourselves preferable to others, nor consequently ought to love our fellow-creatures at all less than ourselves. It is true, that the order of human affairs is such, as to direct every man to apply himself to the conducting of his own concerns, and consulting his own interest; because every man knows best, and is therefore the fittest, to undertake the management of his own concerns, temporal and spiritual. By which means every man's concerns are likely to be managed to the best purpose. But it does not follow from thence, that any man ought in his own mind to prefer himself to another, or to love himself more than his neighbour.

Whoever loves his neighbour as himself, will shew his affection by consulting his interest in all things which may concern either his body, his soul, his fortune, or reputation. For every man, who rationally loves himself, will study his own interest with respect to these four great concerns.

To consult our neighbour's interest, is, to do him no injury; to prevent, as much as in us lies, any other person from injuring him; to do him justice in every respect, and, beyond justice, to shew him all the kindness in our power.

To be negatively good, if we proceed no farther, is deserving no more praise than a stock or

a stone. And those selfish and narrow-hearted people, whose whole praise is, that they do no harm, are not to be reckoned upon as members of society; but are mere cyphers in the creation. Such sordid dispositions, as will admit no thought of any thing but self, can never be fit for any place in that more extensive future society, which will be composed wholly of beings ennobled and perfected by virtue and universal benevolence. For in that higher state, every individual will be connected with the whole, and the whole with every individual. So that there will be no detached or separate beings. This shews the necessity of our becoming habituated to consider ourselves as parts of the whole, and of enlarging our minds by an extensive benevolence. This also shews the strange absurdity of making retirement from society, in the active time of life, a part of religion; as by that unnatural and monstrous practice one third part of our duty is wholly cut off, and the human mind, which ought by all possible methods to be drawn and engaged to society, is detached and separated from it, and habituated to think with horror of the very state for which it was formed.

Affection to our neighbour will prevent our injuring him, and incline us to do him the utmost justice, first as to his fortune, or possessions. I begin with this, as that part of our neighbours concerns, which is of the least consequence; intending to proceed afterwards to those which touch



touch more nearly. Now the foundation of property is in reason, or rectitude ; that is to say, That a person may in such a manner come to be possessed of a portion of the good things of life, that he may have an exclusive right to it, against all mankind ; so that for any other to deprive him of such possession, against his consent, would be iniquitous. As the infinite Author of all things has an unquestionable title to all creatures and things in the universe, it is evident, that he may in the course of his providence give to any man the possession of any of the good things of life ; and what He gives cannot without injustice be, by any private person, forcibly or clandestinely taken away. At the same time, the general consent of society, or the law of the country, in which a person lives, may, for wise and generally beneficial purposes, render property, otherwise rightful, not tenable ; and may make all things common, except where the Divine law has absolutely prohibited alienation, as in matrimony. In a country, where exclusive property is established and supported by law, or mutual agreement, a right to valuable possessions may come, first, by birth. It is plainly agreeable to reason, that a parent provide for his own off-spring, preferably to strangers. The natural affection of even the inferior creatures for their young, leads to this. By the same rule all successions among persons related by marriage, or blood, are equitably, and legally established ; and it becomes injustice

to deprive any one of property so acquired. The fruits of a person's ingenuity, or labour, are also lawful property. Purchase is the giving what one had a right to, for something which belonged to another; and therefore purchase gives a just right. Free gift, from one who has power to give, makes a just title. In things, which have been claimed by no one, the first possession gives a title, as in the case of uninhabited countries. To seize a country by force of arms, to the prejudice of the original inhabitants, is a flagrant injustice. For as the first entrance into an uninhabited country, being by the direction of Providence, gives the first discoverers a title to it, it is evident, that no person can, without violating the laws of justice, disturb the first possessors in their property, or pretend to a settlement in that country, but by agreement with the first possessors.

I do not think it necessary to my purpose, to determine with the utmost exactness the boundaries of property, or how far one person may lawfully encroach upon another's right. Whoever sincerely loves his neighbour with the same measure of affection as himself, will be as tender of his property, as he would wish others to be of his own; and whoever resolves to regulate his conduct according to rectitude, will be more delicately fearful of breaking in upon another's right, than of losing part of his own. And with the utmost reason. For in violating his neighbour's right,

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he becomes guilty before God ; whereas in losing his own, the worst consequence is, his being deprived of what is of no great value in itself, and which he must soon leave behind him.

Whatever practices tend to the violation of any person's just property, they are all contrary to the affection we ought to entertain for our neighbour, and to strict rectitude. Whether such practices are openly violent, or more indirect and concealed, the consequences being the same, the vice is the same ; unless where increased or diminished by circumstances of greater or less aggravation. Thus, receiving, or concealing, the property of another, whether stolen, robbed, or found, if the proprietor is known, or assisting or countenancing another in such practices, is the same injury to our neighbour, as direct theft.

The most extensive and ruinous violation of property, is that which is committed by those scourges and curses of this lower world, Tyrants. When one of those furies, the disgrace and horror of the human species, breaks loose upon mankind, a whole kingdom is robbed, a quarter of the world plundered. And in that day, when all differences of rank will be at an end ; dreadful in that day will be the charge against those who, being by Divine providence raised for the general happiness of mankind, have used their power only to spread extensive misery and distress among God's creatures.

Whoever

Whoever is by the Divine providence raised to a station of power and influence, and takes the advantage of his power, to oppress his inferiors, shews himself not only unjust, but cowardly. For true greatness of mind scorns any unfair advantage. And, if it be unjust to appropriate to one's self what belongs to another, however able he may be to bear the loss, much more cruel and base is it for the rich to avail themselves of their power to the distressing of their poor tenants or dependents. What will add but a small matter to the already overgrown wealth, and superfluous state of the powerful landlord, wrung from the poor industrious farmer, reduces him and his numerous family, to the extremity of distress. And that heart must have little feeling that would not spare a superfluous dish, or a needless bottle, rather than a family of half-a-dozen fellow-creatures should want bread.

I know of no oppression in this happy country, of such great and extensive bad consequence, as that occasioned by the abuse of law : The grievance of which is so much the more calamitous, as the very intention of law is the redress of grievances. It is notorious, that it is in the power of any rascally pettifogger to keep a whole town in fear, and to ruin as many as he pleases of the poor and industrious part of the inhabitants, who are, without doubt, collectively considered, the most valuable part of the people. And the judge upon the bench must sit and see

such wicked practices, without having it in his power to give any relief to an unhappy subject, who is stripped, and his family beggared, to satisfy a voracious blood-sucker; and all under pretence of equity. One single regulation would at once put a stop to this whole complaint, viz. A law, by which in all cases of prosecution about private concerns, if one of the parties chose to submit the cause to arbitration, the other should be obliged to stand to the award. The most judicious and prudent set of men in the nation, I mean the merchants, find this the most amicable, equitable, and frugal manner of deciding disputes about property, and generally use it. And it were to be wished that it were universal; which it is to be hoped the abominable iniquity of law will at last bring about.

The antient maxim, that the rigour of the law, is the height of injustice, is undoubtedly true. And whoever is ready to take all advantages of his neighbour, which the law, strained to its utmost strictness, will give him, shews himself (so far from loving his neighbour as himself) to be of a disposition to plunder his neighbour for his own advantage in the most iniquitous manner, if he could but at the same time keep himself safe; and that it is not the love of justice and of his neighbour, but fear of punishment, that restrains him from the most notorious violations of property by theft or robbery.

If

If by borrowing money, or buying goods upon credit, knowing one's self to be in no condition to pay, while the person he deals with believes him fit to be trusted, if by such means as these, one may as much injure his neighbour's estate as by open violence, or theft, it is evident, that all such proceedings are highly unjust. Every man has a right to know the truth in all cases which concern himself. And whoever conceals from his neighbour a truth, which if he had known, he would have acted another part than he did, is the cause of all the loss he may suffer by such transaction. Yet nothing is more common, than for traders to borrow large sums a very few few days before their becoming insolvent. In which, besides the injustice, the abuse of friendship and confidence greatly aggravates the iniquity.

It is lamentable to observe how little regard is too generally paid to such promises as people think themselves not legally liable to be compelled to the performance of. Breaking promises is violating sacred truth. And withholding from a person what one has absolutely promised him, supposing it still in his power to perform his promise, is depriving him of what he has a right to claim : which is in effect a violation of property. Especially in the case of a dependence upon a promise given, by which the expectant is disappointed, and greatly injured. This is direct injustice, falshood, and cruelty. Nor does

the consideration of an unexpected expence, which the fulfilling of the promise may occasion, bring any excuse for violating it. All that was to have been considered beforehand, and accounted upon, before you gave your promise. At the same time a generous man will quit his right to what has been promised him, when he finds, that the promiser cannot, without considerable detriment, fulfil his engagement.

To with-hold a just debt, though the creditor should not have it in his power to recover it by law, is equally unjust, as in the case of its being recoverable. The intention of the law of bankruptcy is to give unfortunate debtors an opportunity of doing justice to their creditors. Therefore he, who takes the advantage of his being cleared by the statute of bankruptcy, and refuses to make complete payment of his whole debts, when it comes afterwards to be in his power, is guilty of the same sort of injustice as the thief. And to take advantage of sanctuaries, or privileged places; or of the laws in favour of members of either house of parliament, to screen one's self, or others; or by any other means to evade, or assist others in evading, the payment of just debts, where it is in the debtor's power to make payment, is the very same species of iniquity as theft, with the aggravation of the abuse of law, and the baseness of taking an advantage of the weaker.

Nor

Nor is the absolute refusal of a just debt, only injustice; but even the delay of payment beyond a reasonable time, if at all in one's power to make payment, is injurious and iniquitous. And all the prejudice suffered by the creditor, by loss of interest of money, or by inconveniences in his affairs, through want of what he has a just title to, is justly to be laid to the charge of the debtor.

All breach of trust, whether thro' careless neglect or voluntary embezzling of what is committed to one's care, in the capacity of an executor of the will of the dead, of an assignee, steward, factor, deputy; all proceedings of this kind, which are different from the conduct one would pursue in the management of his own concerns, or might in reason expect another to do for him, are deviations from rectitude, and the great rule of loving our neighbour with the same measure of affection as ourselves.

In commerce and traffic, all advantages taken by dealers, against one another, beyond what the one, if he were in the other's place, would think just and reasonable; are iniquitous. Of this kind are all deceits in goods, as putting them off for somewhat better than they are, whether that be done by concealing their real faults, or by giving them counterfeit advantages. Over-rating of commodities; that is, selling them at such a price, as will yield an exorbitant profit to the seller, to the prejudice of the buyer, which shews in a very bad light all monopolies, especially of such articles of



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commerce as are necessary in trade, or in life. All advantages taken by traders possessed of large capitals, to the hurt of persons in narrower circumstances. All advantages taken by the knowing, against the ignorant. Advantages taken by the buyer against the seller, whether of his ignorance or necessity. And those most flagrant iniquities of false weights, measures, or coins; with whatever else in general, may be the means of transferring to one person the property of another in any manner, which he who is the gainer would think an injustice and hardship, if he were in the case of the loser; all such arts of commerce are iniquitous and unjustifiable.

Reader, if thou art wise, thou wilt stop here, and examine thy heart, and thy life. If thou hast ever desired, or effected, the prejudice of thy neighbour in his property, whether by means of power or craft, as thou lovest thy soul, do not delay one day to repent, and reform thy fault, and to make ample restitution, to the injured person, to his heirs, or if these cannot be found, to the poor. If thou goest down to the grave loaded with the spoils of injustice, they will sink thy soul to the bottomless pit. For the Judge of the world is of infinite purity and justice; and will shew no mercy to the impenitent offender against unchangeable and eternal rectitude.

Men being drawn to make encroachments upon the property of others, through avarice; it is evidently the duty of every man to look into his  
own

own heart, and find out whether the love of riches takes up too much room in it. And if he finds, what I doubt most men will find, that he loves riches better than he does his neighbour, that he has a greater desire to gain wealth than to be of service to his fellow-creatures, it is his undoubted duty to conquer the sordid passion, and strengthen the generous one. To this purpose it will be his wisdom to set himself in earnest to deep consideration on the evil of avarice, and the excellence of justice; to earnest prayer to heaven for assistance in the conquest of this vicious disposition; and to avoid extravagance and profusion, which are often the cause of the most rapacious and insatiable avarice.

Every man has a right to be thought and spoken of according to his real character. Consequently, whoever, by any means, direct or indirect, is the occasion of his neighbour's being worse thought, or spoken of, than he deserves, is guilty of injuring his neighbour; and all injurious treatment of a fellow-creature is contrary to rectitude, and inconsistent with the love we ought to have for our neighbour, which ought to be equal to that with which one loves himself.

The most atrocious injury against our neighbour's reputation is, false witness before a judge. The laws of several nations have condemned the guilty of this crime to suffer the same punishment, to which the law exposed the person sworn against.

But

But I know no punishment too severe for a crime of so black a nature, and which draws along with it such horrid consequences. To take the eternal God of truth to witness to a known falsehood; to defeat the very intention of an oath, which is often the only possible means for the discovery of truth; to render all human testimony suspicious; to stop the course of justice, and open a door to all manner of iniquity and violence; to blast the character of an innocent person in the most public manner, and in the manner the most effectual for ruining it, as being the most likely to gain belief to his prejudice; to violate his property, perhaps to reduce himself and his family to beggary; or to be the cause of passing upon him a sentence of death for what he never was capable of committing; to take a false oath against a person before a court, is to be guilty of such black and complicated crimes as these. And for this our law inflicts a punishment, which a little money given the constables makes almost no punishment.

To spread a false report against any person, is contrary to the love we ought to have for our neighbour, and to justice, whether it be known to be such, or invented for the purpose by the publisher, or whether it be a mere surmise or suspicion. To invent a lye, or propagate a known falsehood, to the prejudice of any person's character, is taking up the office of Satan himself, who is styled in Scripture the Accuser. But, that even insinuations,

insinuations, and whispers, or nods and shrugs, by which an innocent character may be blasted or ruined, are wicked and cruel, every man's conscience will tell him, if he will put it to himself how he should like to be so used, or reflect upon the uneasiness it gave him, if ever he suffered in the same manner.

If by sneering and ridicule, upon an innocent infirmity, a person may be laughed out of the respect and esteem, which every worthy character deserves, it is evident, that such wantonly mischievous mirth is highly unjustifiable.

The cruelty of all practices, which tend to lessen the reputation of an innocent person, appears plainly from the value of reputation; which is always dear to great and worthy minds; and the loss of which is in some cases peculiar fatal. The characters of a clergyman, a governor of youth, a trader, or a virgin, are more delicate than those of other persons. And whoever is capable of wantonly attacking such characters, must be wholly void of sentiment for his fellow-creatures.

There is a peculiarity in the vice we are now treating of, which renders it more atrocious, than that of invading our neighbour's property. It is, that often the injured person is robbed of what is to him of inestimable worth, and the cruel spoiler not enriched by the rapine. For the defamer commonly reaps neither profit, honour, nor pleasure, unless the indulgence of malice can  
be

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be called a pleasure, which if it is, Satan must be a very happy being.

The defamer is as much more infamous than the open railer, as the dark assassin is more to be dreaded than the fair challenger. And the defamer and assassin resemble one another, in that the wounds which both give, prove often incurable.

Reader, if thou makest it thy practice to divert thyself with mischief, or to strive to build thyself an ill-founded reputation upon the ruins of thy neighbour's, or think'st, by undermining him, to get thyself into the advantages he now enjoys; remember I have told thee there will be no triumph hereafter, when thou comest to be judged for thy idle words. The ill-gotten advantages, thou mayst reap from thy base treachery to thy brother, if thou shouldst be successful, which is seldom the case, will bring a curse along with them, a canker worm, that will destroy both them and thee. And take notice, no malicious, envious, or cruel disposition will find any admittance into the seats of future bliss. If thou think'st to be hereafter a companion of angels and spirits of good men, resolve in time to form thy mind to universal benevolence. Learn to consider even the abandoned offender as still a human creature, the production of the same goodness which made thyself; as not yet out of the reach of the Divine grace, and therefore not to be given up as absolutely irrecoverable, and, if recoverable, again  
a fit

a fit object for thy love; for thy Maker's love. Do not therefore dare in thy mind to hate or despise, nor in thy conversation to reflect, but with pity and humanity, upon even the real vices of thy fellow-creature, much less to blacken his unspotted reputation. The day will come, when thou shalt stand before the same judgment seat with him. He is not thy creature, but God's, Leave him to God. Is a fellow-creature guilty of a fault? So art thou. It is no part of thy duty to enquire into his faults, or to lay them open to others, unless to prevent the mischief thou knowest he is preparing to do another. If thou art not sure of a superior good to be gained by discovering thy neighbour's faults, why shouldst thou take upon thee the character of an informer? If thy neighbour is really guilty, why shouldst thou be ambitious of the office of an executioner, or delight in lashing offenders? If thou hast been so wicked as basely to stab the reputation of thy innocent fellow-creature, I charge thee, as thou lovest thy soul, that thou endeavour to heal up the wound thou hast made. Take care, that every single person, be the number ever so great, whose ear thou hast abused, be set right with respect to the character of the innocent. If those, whose minds thou hast poisoned, have communicated the venom to others; be sure to trace the wicked lye, the spawn of thy own foul tongue, thro' all its doublings, and destroy it, that it may spread its deadly influence no farther. Take  
 shame

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shame to thyself, and do justice to innocence. Thou hadst better suffer shame now, than hereafter before God, angels, and men.

It is plainly contrary to the benevolent affection we ought to have for our fellow-creature, to put him to any pain or distress of body, as by beating, wounding, or maiming, unless in self-defence, when unjustly attacked; in lawful war; or in case of his having deserved corporal correction, and if we are authorised by a just law to inflict, or cause it to be inflicted upon him.

If it be contrary to the affection we ought to have for our neighbour, to put him to bodily pain needlessly, or unjustly, it is much more so, to deprive him of life, unless he has forfeited it according to law.

This injury is so much the more atrocious, as it is irreparable. And it seems to me very much to be doubted, whether human authority ought in reason to be extended to the pardon of the murder of the innocent. Scripture is express, "that he who sheds man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed."

There seems to be in this crime somewhat peculiarly offensive to heaven, in that the Divine providence does so often, by most striking and wonderful interpositions, bring the authors of it to light in a manner different from what happens in other cases. For, of the numbers, who lose their lives by violence, it is remarkable that there are few instances of the murderer's escaping. That

in so great and wicked a city as *London*, for example, there should not every year be many people missing, being made away with secretly, and the authors of their death never found; is very remarkable. We find that often the sagacity of dogs, and other animals, and even inanimate things, have been the occasion of bringing this foul crime to light. But the most common means of the discovery of bloody deeds has been conscience, which, acting the part of a torturer, has forced the tongue, through extremity of anguish, to disclose the secret, which no other but itself could bring to light.

It being by pride and passion, that men are incited to break loose upon one another in acts of violence, it is plain, that the best method of preventing our falling into them is, by subduing those fatal passions, which transport us beyond the power and use of reason. And if nothing tends more to inflame every passion, than the use of strong liquors, how cautious ought we to be of indulging the maddening draught, which may drive us upon extravagancies, we could not in our cooler hours believe ourselves capable of? Cruelty, even to the brute creation, is altogether unjustifiable, much more to our fellow-creatures. Nor can any thinking person believe it possible, that a mind disposed to barbarity, or insensible of the miseries of our fellow-beings, can be at all fit for a future state, in which goodness is to prevail.

A wise



A wise man will dread the beginning of quarrels. For no one knows where a quarrel, once begun, may end. None of us knows how much of the evil spirit is either in himself or in his adversary. And he, who begins, is in conscience answerable for all the consequences. Nor was there ever a falling out without folly, at least on one side, if not on both. Were one sure the worst that was to happen would be the ruffling of his own or his neighbour's temper, or the discomposing of their spirits, even that cannot be without guilt. And is an empire of consequence enough to make any thinking man offend God, and endanger his or his neighbour's soul? Tremble, reader, at the thought of being suddenly snatched away (as nothing is more common than sudden death) and sent into the world of spirits not from a contest with a fellow-creature, and fellow-christian.

Hurting our neighbour's health by tempting him to be guilty of intemperance, is as really contrary to that affection we ought to have for him, as wounding, or poisoning him. It is no more an alleviation of the guilt of seducing him into debauchery, that it may not cut him off in less than several years (which is likewise more than can be certainly affirmed) than it is less murder to poison in the *Italian* manner, than with a dose of arsenick. But to lead a fellow-creature into a course of debauchery is, as above observed,

observed, poisoning both soul and body at once.

To grieve, afflict, or terrify a fellow-creature needlessly, or unjustly, is injuring him as to his soul. And the anguish of the mind being more severely felt, than bodily pain, the inflicting the former upon an innocent person is a greater act of cruelty. It is therefore shocking to think how one half of mankind sport with the anguish of the other. How little they make the case of their fellow-creatures their own, or consider what they must suffer from their wicked aspersions, misrepresentations, and oppressive and injurious treatment; which bring a pain proportioned to the sensibility of the sufferer. And every one knows, that the delicacy of some minds renders them as different from others, as the temper of the lamb is meeker than that of the tiger.

But the most direct injury against the spiritual part of our fellow-creature is, leading him into vice; whether that be done by means of solicitation; by artfully imposing on his judgment; by powerful compulsion; or by prevailing example.

Some tempers are so impotently ductile, that they can refuse nothing to repeated solicitation. Whoever takes the advantage of such persons, is guilty of the lowest baseness. Yet nothing is more common, than for the debauched part of our sex to shew their heroism by a poor triumph over weak, easy, thoughtless woman; no-

thing more frequent, than to hear them boast of the ruin of that virtue, of which it ought to be their pride to be the defenders. "Poor fool! "she loved me, and therefore could refuse me "nothing." Base coward! Dost thou boast thy conquest over one, who, by thy own confession, was disabled for resistance; disabled by her affection for thy worthless self? Does affection deserve such a return? Is superior understanding, or rather deeper craft, to be used against thoughtless simplicity; and its shameful success to be boasted of? Dost thou pride thyself, that thou hast had art enough to decoy the harmless lamb to thy hand, that thou mightst shed its blood?

To call good evil, and evil good, is in Scripture stigmatized with a curse. And to put out the bodily eyes is not so great an injury, as to mislead, or extinguish the understanding, and impose upon the judgment in matters of right and wrong. Whoever is guilty of this inhuman and diabolical wickedness, may in reason expect to have the soul, he has been the ruin of, required hereafter at his hands.

I am very suspicious, that many persons in eminent stations have very little notion of their being highly criminal in the sight of God, in setting a bad example before the rest of mankind. No person, who thinks at all, can doubt, whether it is justifiable to advise, or force others to be guilty of vice. But if there is a way incomparably more effectual and alluring, by which people

people are more powerfully drawn into wickedness; surely that is more mischievous and hurtful, and ought most carefully to be avoided.

Of all tyranny, none is so inhuman, as where men use their power over others, to force them into wickedness. The bloody persecutor, who uses threats and punishments, prisons, racks, and fires, to compel the unhappy sufferer to make shipwreck of faith, and give up truth and a good conscience; the corrupt minister, or candidate, who bullies the unhappy dependent into the perjured vote; these, and such like, are in the way toward being qualified for becoming furies and fiends in the lower regions. For who is so fit for the place of a tormentor, to stand among evil spirits, and plunge the emerging souls deeper in hell-flames, than he, who, on earth, made it his infernal employment, to thrust his fellow-creatures into those ways, which lead down to the chambers of destruction?

Reader, if thou hast ever been the cause of a fellow-creature's guilt; if thou hast, by force or art, betrayed a wretched soul into vice, and acted the part of an agent of Satan; I charge thee on thy soul, put not off thy repentance for an hour. Prevent, if possible, the final ruin thy cursed arts tend to bring upon a human creature. Endeavour to open the eyes, which thou hast closed; to enlighten the understanding thou hast blinded; and to lead again into the right way the feet, thou hast taught to wander from it. If thou wilt

go to destruction, why shouldst thou drag others with thee? If thy ambition prompts thee to ruin thy own soul, spare that of thy poor fellow-creature, who has no concern with thy schemes. Must thy brother have a place in the infernal regions, to get thee a place at court? Take back the damning bribe; prevent the perjured vote: think how thou wilt bear the eternal howlings of a spirit by thy temptations sunk to irrecoverable perdition.

Besides the general duty of benevolence to all, who partake of the same common nature, which is indispensably necessary in the nature of things toward the very being of society, in the present state, and for fitting us for entering into a more extensive society hereafter; besides the general benevolence we owe to all our fellow-creatures, it is evident, that we owe particular duties to particular persons, according to the relations and connexions we have with them. This propriety is founded in the nature of things\*, and is self-evident. It is as plain, that reverence to superiors, for example, is proper, as that all the angles of a plain triangle are equal to two right ones. It is as evident, that the contempt of one really superior to us, would be wrong, as that it would be wrong to say that twice two are equal to fifty.

\* See the first Section of this third book.

The first, and most important of all relative social duties, is that which we owe to our country. That we ought to study the interest of our country, is plain from considering, that the love of our families, and even self-love, cannot be pursued, or established, on any rational footing, but what will extend to that of our country (for it is impossible for all families and individuals to be happy in a ruined country) and from considering, that, if no person loved his country, but every individual was indifferent about its interest, no country could subsist; but the world must quickly come to an end.

The virtue of patriotism is most indispensable in persons in high stations, whose rank gives them an opportunity of being of important service to the public interest. These ought to consider themselves as general protectors and fathers, to whose care the rest of mankind are by Divine providence committed; and ought to tremble at the thought of betraying so awful a trust. And the interest of a country consists briefly in its being properly secured against enemies; in its being governed by good laws, duly executed; in its being secured in its liberties, civil and religious, the boundaries of which last cannot be too ample, though the former may easily be extended to licentiousness, as is at present most flagrantly the case in *England*; in its being kept under such a police, and such regulations, as may tend to promote health, virtue, public and pri-

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vate, and real religion; in a due encouragement of commerce, agriculture, manufactures, learning and arts. Whatever a nation can be the better for the encouragement of, or the worse if discouraged, is the province of governors to be perfect masters of, and to see effectual means used for carrying into execution every salutary scheme. With respect to the health of a people, for example, the duty of governors is not only to take all possible care to prevent the importation of infections from foreign parts, but that the people have it not in their power by the use of unwholesome provisions of any kind to hurt their constitutions, to the enfeebling and enervating of the race, as is most atrociously and extensively the case at present in *England*, by means of too low-priced spirituous liquors. Again, it is unquestionably the duty of governors to see to it, that there be no encouragement given to idleness, or debauchery; but that, on the contrary, all vices hurtful to society be liable to every kind of discouragement. That there be something found for every creature to do, who has any measure of health or strength, that all excuse for idleness may be removed, and the crime of doing nothing be severely punishable. That lewdness and prostitution be at least driven from appearing in public without shame or restraint, to the corrupting of the youth of a nation. That marriage, the main support of states, be in the most effectual manner encouraged, and celibacy, after

mature age (one of the worst offences against our country) subjected to every inconvenience and burden. That all possible encouragement be given to every person who enriches or adorns his country by any valuable discovery, or noble production, in arts, or sciences, and particularly to those, whose literary labours tend to the advancement of public and private virtue, and religion. Whatever tends to the increase of luxury and extravagance ought to be laid under severe restraints, and heavy taxes; as in general all taxes ought to fall on the luxury and superfluity of life, while industry and frugality escape free.

To understand thoroughly all these particulars, and to endeavour to promote and improve them, is the proper calling of persons of rank and weight in a nation. And whoever makes no other advantage of a high station, than to plunder his country to gratify his avarice, to raise himself and his creatures to affluence, or to indulge sensuality, is unworthy of the honourable rank he holds; is a treacherous betrayer of his sacred trust, and instead of honour deserves the contempt of all men of virtue and public spirit. For the true dignity of high life consists in a superior elevation of mind; more extensive improvements in knowledge; a greater contempt of whatever is unworthy; a more enlarged benevolence to mankind; a more uncorrupted integrity; and a more sublime way of thinking, speaking, and acting, than is to be seen in other men.



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Whoever is not in these respects superior to the rest of mankind, may be richer, but can with no propriety of speech be said to be greater, than others. For it is not the dress, the station, or the fortune, but the mind, that is the man. Therefore a little mind makes a mean man; a great mind a great man.

Though it is chiefly by the great, that the interest of a nation is to be consulted and supported, it is certain, that every person has it in his power to serve his country less or more. Whoever plants a tree, incloses a field, builds a house, is the cause of a child's being brought into the world, and educated for becoming a valuable member of society, whoever, in short, fills a useful place in life, serves his country more than five hundred of those idle recluses, and holy drones, with which popish countries swarm. Especially, men of abilities, in the most private stations, are capable of serving their country, if not by action, yet by suggesting useful hints to those, whose stations give them an opportunity of action; and of improving, by their conversation and writings, the minds and manners of their countrymen.

The true love of our country will shew itself in our preferring the public to our own private interest, wherever they come in competition. In a conscientious obedience to the laws, though to our own particular disadvantage. In a proper reverence to our governors, especially the supreme;

preme ; even in cases where we do not see enough (as how should persons in private stations ?) to be able to explain to ourselves, or others, the wisdom of all their measures.

It is with a thorough concern, I cannot help remarking here, that the very contrary of all this seems to be the rule, by which the people of *England* conduct themselves in the present age. Is it not notorious, that the virtue of public spirit is become little else than a subject of ridicule ? That venality has poisoned all ranks, from the bribed voter in a country-borough, upwards to the candidate for a place in the great assembly of the nation ? The enormous expences bestowed, and horrible perjury committed, in carrying elections ; with the numerous controverted elections which are from time to time the subject of examination before the house ; and the variety of regulations found necessary to be made for restraining bribery and corruption (though the most effectual regulation, I mean, of voting in all cases by ballot, which the wise states of antiquity found necessary, has not been tried) all this shews too flagrantly, to what a fatal extent this ruinous and destructive mischief reaches. Nor is there any hope of an effectual cure for the evil, while such a pernicious maxim in politics as the following is held, I had almost said, established ; That it is lawful to bribe for the good of the nation (as they very improperly speak) in order to be on even terms with the enemies of the

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the nation. The Jacobite, or Tory party (say our politicians) will get themselves elected into parliament by bribery : Why must not the gentlemen of revolution-principles endeavour to defeat them by the same means ? To expose this fatal doctrine, which is sometimes defended by very well-meaning men, let it be considered, first, that Jacobitism, or Toryism, in the southern part of the nation is in fact little more than another word for the party who are out, and would be in. There are few men of the least sense, and knowledge of the world, on this side the *Highlands* of *Scotland*, who do in sober earnest wish to see a papist on the *British* throne. Slavery, civil and religious, will not go down with those who have long enjoyed the sweets of liberty. And if Jacobitism and Toryism be little more than a bugbear, and the virtue of a people, the only sure foundation of government and national happiness, is to be corrupted and ruined by a contention between two sets of men, either of which might be as likely to pursue the interest of the nation as the other, it is plain, that both sides are guilty ; the pretended Whigs, who are in, and the pretended Tories, who are out ; it being equally contrary to virtue, and to the laws of the land, to bribe for one side as for another. But, supposing the case to be exactly as first put, and that all, who pretend to be disaffected, were really so in their hearts ; and that their inclination, and their power, to subvert the constitution,

tion, were much grearer than they are; it is evident, that to do a positive evil, that an uncertain good may come, is directly contrary both to reason and religion. For the real friends of liberty to oppose the enemies of our country, by bribery and corruption, is directly iniquitous and impious. For, to proceed in that manner is to confound the immutable nature of right and wrong, to throw down the sacred barriers, established by Divine authority for guarding the awful laws of virtue from violation, which are to be held in the utmost reverence, and on no account to be broke through, if not only a kingdom should suffer a revolution; but if the solar system, or whole visible universe, were to go to wreck. For one act of perjury, or other gross deviation from virtue, is more opposite to the Divine nature, and oeconomy of the world, than the extinction of a thousand suns, with the destruction of all their planers. But besides all this, what can be more absurd, than to talk of supporting a state by vice, the very means which have proved the ruin of all the states that ever have sunk; and without which no state could be brought to ruin? Alas, does it become such poor short-sighted creatures as we are, to project schemes for ourselves, to violate the eternal laws of virtue, in order, forsooth, to put it in the power of Divine providence to do what it could not without our assistance? Can any politician think, that promoting bribery or perjury are likely to gain us  
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the Divine protection? or that the kingdom can stand independent of the Divine protection? or that it can stand without virtue? These are deplorable expedients. Like opiates in an acute distemper, they lull things into peace for a short time, while they slowly, but surely, wear out the strength and vitals of the constitution.——  
O virtue! O my country!

Is it not also notorious, that the bulk of our laws, through the criminal negligence, or timidity, of those, in whose hands the executive power is lodged, and through the licentiousness of the people, who seem to think it the privilege of free-born *Englishmen* to break their own laws, are, instead of a necessary restraint, become a mere bugbear? Above all things, that law-makers are sometimes law-breakers, is a shocking accusation to be laid against persons in eminent stations. That the same persons in their legislative capacity should concur to the making of regulations for the suppression of the destructive practices of smuggling, gaming, unduly influencing elections, and the like, and in their private capacity should be the promoters of those ruinous vices; is doing what they can to turn government into a farce, and reduce a nation to a state of anarchy.

Is it not monstrous, that, by means of the madness and insolence of party, such a degree of arrogant and seditious virulence is worked up in the spirits of the people, that the lowest of the  
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mob thinks himself wise enough to take to task the governors of the state, and assumes the liberty, over his cups, to rail at the legislators of his country; by which means, the best constituted kingdom upon earth seems hastening to a state of confusion; while the people's reverence for lawful authority, whereby obedience subsists, is destroyed, the measures of government are embarrassed; and our governors discouraged from attempting to alter, or new-model any thing, that may be amiss; since nothing can be done without clamour and disturbance, and laws, when enacted, are, through the perverseness of the people, of very little efficacy.

These are not the effects of the love of our country. Nor the infamous practice of smuggling, and other mean arts, by which the laws for raising a revenue for defraying the necessary expences of government, are evaded. Yet it is notorious, that the avowed principle of numbers of persons in trade, is, That all is well got, that is got by cheating the king, as they absurdly talk. For defrauding the public revenue is in effect defrauding the people, who pay it, and making it necessary for the government to lay additional taxes, and to clog and incumber trade and industry, to make up the deficiencies occasioned by the depredations of a set of lawless people, the plague and ruin of fair traders. It is amazing, that rational creatures can contrive so effectually to blind their reason, and stupify their conscience,

conscience, as to bring themselves to argue, that though it is confessedly unjustifiable and wicked in a son to disobey his parent, yet there is no harm in disobeying that authority, which is higher than the parental, I mean, that of the law of the land; that, though it is wrong to cheat or lye, there is no harm in taking a false oath at the custom-house, by which the guilt of perjury is incurred; the revenue, or more properly the nation, robbed; and the fair trader injured.

People may deceive themselves, as they please: But there is hardly any worse species of vice, than disobedience and insolence to supreme lawful authority. Nor will any person be fit for a future state of peace, regularity, and perfect obedience to the universal Governor (without which there can be no happiness) who has in this state habituated himself to lawless opposition and contempt of government.

To raise an opposition or rebellion in a country against the supreme authority, except upon most powerful causes and motives, is a crime of as horrid and complicated a kind as any to which human wickedness is capable of proceeding. For the consequences of a general disturbance in a state, are the perpetration of all kinds of iniquity. And where so dreadful a consequence is foreseen, it is evident, nothing less than the prevention of a total subversion of rights and privileges, civil and religious, of which the last is much the most important,

important, is a sufficient plea for disturbing the general peace.

This was confessedly the case at the Revolution in 1688. But those men, who delight in misrepresenting a government, and making them odious and vile in the eyes of the people, and do all they can to thwart and embarrass their measures, merely because themselves have no share in the emoluments of place and power, are the pests of society.

One of the greatest curses of our nation, and of liberty in general, is that of our unhappy divisions and parties in religion and politics. As for the first, it is a subject of too serious and important a nature to be made a mere badge of faction, or a bone of contention. The design of religion is to improve and dignify our natures, to correct our errors in judgment, and to regulate our lives. And whoever applies it as a tool of state, as an artifice for aggrandizing himself, or his friends, and a cloke to conceal his secular views, is guilty of prostituting the most sacred thing in the world, to the vilest uses. As for political parties, it is notorious, that those who assume to themselves the most splendid titles of being on the patriot side, or country-interest, and against the court, as their cant is, generally make a clamour for pretended liberty, and the good of their country, only to have their mouths stopped with a place or a pension; and that, on the other hand, those who stand up in defence  
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of all the measures of those in power, without distinction, only do so with a view to get, or to keep some emolument. As it is inconceivable that either one or the other party should be constantly in the right, or invariably in the wrong, you may conclude, that whoever inclines universally for, or against either side, without ever altering his opinion, is either a man of very mean abilities, or has some indirect scheme in view. The trimmer, who gives his vote sometimes with one side, sometimes with the other, according to the view he has of the consequences, is the only man of integrity. And I cannot help advising my readers to look upon all parties, and all who make either religion or politics a party-affair, in the same light, and to keep clear of all sides alike; making it their business to consult the real good of their country, and the real welfare of their souls, without any eye to the sordid gains of corruption, or any desire to fight the battles of either party.

To conclude, our duty to our country comprehends all the relative duties. And we are to sacrifice private interest, family, and life itself to it, when called upon; and are to obey its laws in all cases where they do not clash with the only superior authority in the universe, I mean, the Divine.

Next under the authority of national government, is the parental. The propriety and necessity of submission to parents appears from considering,

sidering, that it is evidently necessary, that some person, or persons, should undertake the care of children in the helpless time of life; and that none are so proper as the parents. In consequence of this, it is necessary that children, before they come to the use of reason, be governed by authority, and there is none so natural as that of parents; it is therefore their part to return the reciprocal duties of love, gratitude, reverence, and obedience to those who have taken care of them, when no one else would undertake that office. And it being once made the appointed course and order of things, the law of filial duty is not to be broke through by the children on account of a failure in the parents in discharging their duty; nor contrariwise, are parents to give up the care of their children, though they should turn out untowardly. Obedience to parents extends to all things that are consistent with the laws of our country, and of God, both which authorities are superior to that of parents.

The duty of parents to their children is briefly to take care that proper provision be made for their bodily interest, by food, cloathing, and education, and more especially for that of their minds, by forming them, from the earliest years, to virtue and religion.

The duty of spiritual pastors to their people, is to do whatever is in their power for the good of the souls committed to their charge, by preaching, catechising, counselling, or writing. How-

ever improper it may be thought for a layman to enlarge upon this relative duty, it cannot be improper to refer to one, from whom directions on this head will come with unexceptionable authority, I mean the apostle *Paul* in his Epistles to *Timothy*. The duty of people to their pastors, is to shew them a great deal more reverence and gratitude, than is commonly done in *England*.

The duty of instructors of youth is briefly, to fill the place of parents in forming those consigned to their care by the parents, to usefulness in life, and happiness hereafter. The duty of young persons to their governors and teachers is obedience, and diligence in endeavouring to improve themselves, while under their care, and gratitude and love to those, by whose faithful diligence they had the opportunity of becoming wise and good men. And the duty of gratitude to parents and teachers on this account will be binding upon those who have been the objects of their care, not only for life, but to eternity.

The duty of masters to servants, is to pay them according to engagement; to treat them as fellow-creatures, though in an inferior station; and to take care, that they have opportunities of knowing their duty, and means of happiness. That of servants to masters is faithfulness, diligence, and obedience in all lawful cases.

The duty of husbands to wives, is the tenderest love, and warmest desire of their happiness in life, and to eternity. That of wives to husbands,

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bands, besides reciprocal love, takes in obedience in all lawful things. This arises from the consideration of the priority of creation, and superior dignity of the male-sex, to which nature has given the greater strength of mind and body, and therefore fitted them for authority. But as, on one hand, it is not the part of a good wife to contest the authority of her husband, so neither is it of a good husband to stand up for the privilege of his sex, while he shews little of the tenderness which is due to the weaker. This is, in short, a string never to be touched, for it always introduces discord, and interrupts the matrimonial harmony.

Love is the fulfilling of the whole duty mutually owing by collateral relations, as brothers, sisters, and the like. And such persons may easily know whether they do their duty to one another, by considering how people behave to those they really love.

In friendship, of which I have treated in the first book, the duties are mutual love, fidelity, secrecy, and a desire of promoting one another's happiness both spiritual and temporal. Virtue is the only foundation of friendship. The commerce of the wicked is rather to be called a combination or conspiracy against mankind, than friendship.

The duty of the rich to the poor, is feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, visiting the sick, and in general, supplying the wants of the

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neecessitous. Those, to whom the Divine providence has been distinguishingly bountiful, are to consider themselves as stewards of the good gifts of heaven, which they are not to lavish away upon their own extravagant lusts, but to distribute to their distressed brethren. Nor ought they to think of this as an act of generosity, or almost of supererogation, as many seem, by their ostentatious way of giving charity, to do. It is not what they may do, or let alone. It is not to be carried to what length they please, and no farther. They are expected to give all they can give; and then to think they have done only what they ought. Since to do less, if we will take our Saviour's own word for it, is a neglect which will exclude from future bliss. There is indeed great prudence to be used, that a judicious choice of objects may be made, and that the charity given may not prove a prejudice, instead of an advantage. If what is given serves to support in idleness and debauchery, it had much better be with-held. Care is also to be taken, that our charity be not given for fashion, ostentation, or any other view, but obedience to God, and benevolence to our fellow creatures. In as far as any other consideration has influence, in so far the real excellence of such good works is lessened in the sight of Him, who searches the heart.

The duty of the poor, is gratitude to their benefactors; and industry, in endeavouring as much

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as they can, to lighten the burden of their own support to those who contribute to it.

Propriety and rectitude require, that the learned and wise use their endeavours to instruct and advise the ignorant and unthinking. And in general, that every person employ his peculiar talent or advantage for the most extensive usefulness. It is with this view that such remarkable differences are made in the gifts of mind and fortune, which different persons share. These are parts of their respective trials; and they will be judged according to the use they have made of them.

Our duty to benefactors is evidently love and gratitude. Even to enemies we owe, according to the Christian law, of which afterwards, forgiveness, and intercession with heaven for them, which also we are obliged to for all our fellow-creatures.

The rectitude or propriety of these several obligations being self-evident, it would be only wasting time to take the pains to establish it by arguments.

The infinitely wise Governor of the universe has placed us in this state, and engaged us in such a variety of connexions with, and relations to one another, on purpose to habituate us to a sense of duty and love of obedience and regularity. The more duties we have to do in our present state of discipline, the more occasion we have for watchfulness, and diligence, and a due exer-

tion of every noble power of the mind. And the more practice we have of exerting our powers, the stronger they must grow; and the more we practise obedience, the more tractable and obedient we must naturally become; and to be obedient to the supreme Governor of the world, is the very perfection of every created nature. Again, the various connexions among mankind, and the different duties resulting from them, naturally tend to work in us a settled, and extensive benevolence for our fellow-beings, and to habituate us to think and act with tenderness, forbearance, and affection toward them. And it is evident, that this sublime and godlike disposition cannot be too much cultivated. We can never be in any state, in which it will not be for our advantage, and for the advantage of all the other beings, with whom we may be connected, that we be disposed to extensive and unbounded benevolence for one another. It is obvious, that a happy society, in which hatred and ill-will should universally prevail, is an inconceivable and contradictory idea. Whatever may be the nature of the states we may be hereafter designed for, it is evident, we shall be the fitter for them, for having cultivated in our minds an extensive universal love of all other beings. But if we suppose, what seems agreeable to Scripture views, as well as to reason, that those, who shall be found worthy of a future life, are to be raised to stations, not of indolence and inactivity, but of  
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extensive usefulness in the creation, such as we suppose to be filled at present by angels, I mean, of guardians, and governors over beings of lower ranks, during their state of trial and discipline; if this be a reasonable supposition, it is plain, that the sublime virtue of benevolence cannot be carried too far. And this sets forth the Divine wisdom in placing us in a state, in which we have such opportunities of being habituated to a disposition so useful and necessary for all orders of rational beings throughout all periods of their existence.

It will be the reader's wisdom here carefully to examine his conduct, that he may know, whether he acts the part of a valuable and useful member of society. If he has wrought into his soul a kind, a generous, and extensive benevolence toward all his fellow-creatures, whether in high or low stations; whether rich or poor; whether foreigners, or countrymen; whether of his own religion, or any other; learned or unlearned; virtuous or vicious; friends or enemies; if he finds it recommendation enough to his regard and affection, that it is a fellow-creature who wants his assistance, a being produced by the same Almighty hand which created himself; if he earnestly wishes, and is at all times ready, to promote the good of his fellow-creatures by all means in his power, by his riches, his advice, his interest, his labour, at any time, seasonable or unseasonable, in a way agreeable to his own



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particular temper and inclination, or in a manner that may be less suitable to it; if he finds himself ready with the open arms of forgiveness to receive his enemy, the moment he appears disposed to repentance and reconciliation; if he finds, that it would be a pleasure to him to do good to those who have injured him, though his goodness should never be known; if he finds, that he is in no part of his private devotions more zealous, than when he prays from his heart to Him who searches all hearts, that his enemy may be pardoned, reformed, and made as happy hereafter as himself; if he finds that one disappointment or abuse of his goodness, or ten such discouragements, do not cool his ardour for the good of mankind; that he does not immediately fall out of conceit with a public-spirited design, because of its difficulties, or uncertainty of success; but that he can stand the raillery of those narrow souls, who cannot rise to his pitch of disinterested benevolence; and that, though he goes on resolutely, and without wearying in well-doing, he does not do it from pride or self-sufficiency, but from real well-meant goodness of heart and design; if he does not search for excuses, but considers himself as obliged to be always endeavouring to gain some kind and beneficial end, without regard to its being more or less directly in his way, or more or less promising of success, if it is the best he can do at the time, and if no one else will do it better, or engage in it at all;  
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and that after all he considers himself as an unprofitable servant, as having done still only his indispensable duty ; if the reader finds this to be the turn of his mind, he may conclude that he is not far from that perfection of benevolence, which the Divine rectitude and law require, and which is necessary to fit every human mind for being a member of an universal society hereafter. If on the other hand, he finds, that he is wholly wrapt up in himself ; that he thinks with no relish of the happiness of any one else ; that his utmost benevolence extends no wider than the circle of his own family, friends, or party ; that all he wants is to enrich himself and his relations ; that he cannot look with any personal tenderness or consideration upon a *Frenchman*, or *Spaniard*, a *Jew*, or a papist, or even a church-man, or dissenter, if he differs from them in profession ; if, reader, thou findest this to be the turn of thy mind, if, in a word, thou dost not find it to be thy meat and thy drink to do thy fellow-creature good, if thou dost not love thy neighbour with the same affection as thyself, be assured thou art not at present of the disposition of mind, which the universal Governor would have all his rational creatures brought to ; and mayst judge what chance thou hast for His favour, whose favour is life and happiness ; whose love to all his creatures tends to draw and unite them to himself, and would have them all love one another, that by universal love they may be united into one society, under one infinite Lord and universal Father.

## S E C T. VIII.

*Of our Obligations with respect to our Creator.*

**W**E come now to the third, and noblest part of the duty of rational beings, which is also their highest honour, I mean, That which they owe to the Creator, Preserver, and Governor of themselves, and the universe. The first part, or foundation of which is, The belief of his existence.

The abstract proof of the existence of God requires nothing to be granted, but only, That something now exists; which concession forces the mind to confess the necessity of some First cause, existing naturally, necessarily, and independently upon any other; Himself the cause of all things; Himself the fountain of being, and plenitude of perfection.

This proof leaves no room for cavilling; but effectually cuts off the subtle disputer from every possible evasion, or subterfuge. It is not however so easy for those, who have not been accustomed to abstract reasoning, to see the conclusive force of it. For the bulk of mankind, the fittest arguments for the being of God, are taken from the stupendous works of nature. And what object is there in the whole compass of nature, animate or inanimate, great or small, rare or common, which does not point to the almighty Author of all things? Not only those which  
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strike us with astonishment, and fill our minds with their greatness; not only the view of a rolling ocean, a blazing sun, or the concave of heaven sparkling with its innumerable starry fires; but even the sight of a flower, a pile of grass, or a reptile of the dust, every particle of matter around us; the body, into which his breath has infused our life; the soul, by which we think and know; whatever we fix our eye or thought upon, holds forth the ever-present Deity. In what state or place must we be, to be insensible of him, by whom our very being is preserved? Whither must we withdraw ourselves, to be out of the reach of his Divine communications, who minutely fills every point of boundless space? Is it possible to obliterate from our minds the thought of him in whom we live, and move, and have our being?

The first and fundamental duty of all rational beings to God, is, as I have said, To believe his existence. Now, though there is nothing praiseworthy in believing the most important truth upon insufficient grounds; and though, on the contrary, credulity is a weakness unworthy of a being endowed with a capacity of examining and finding out truth; yet there may be a great wickedness in unbelief. For a person may, from obstinacy and perverseness, reject important truth, or through levity, folly, or an attachment to vice, may avoid the proper and natural means of conviction. So that the effect, which the rational  
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and clear persuasion of important truth might have had upon his disposition and practice, may be lost. And it is greatly to be suspected, that multitudes are guilty of this last crime, with respect to the awful doctrine of the existence of God. If they be asked, whether they believe that there is a God, they will take it amiss to be suspected of the least inclination to atheism. But it is evident, from their lives and conversations, that if they believe the existence of God at all, it is in such a manner, as is next to no belief. They think not of the matter. There may, or may not, be a God for any think they know, or care.

But to believe this important doctrine in a manner becoming a rational creature, is to bear in mind a constant and habitual impression of an infinitely perfect Nature, the Author and Fountain of existence, the wise and righteous Governor of the universe, who is every where present, beholding all the actions and intentions of his creatures, to whom all rational beings are accountable, and upon whose favour or disapprobation their fate to all eternity wholly depends. To think of the Supreme being in any other way than this, is not believing his existence in a rational and consistent manner.

And did men really admit the rational belief of a God; did they impress their minds with a fixed and constant attention to the awful thought of their being under the continual inspection of their judge, we should not see them proceed in  
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the manner they do. For I ask, how the bulk of mankind could behave worse than they do, if they were sure there was no God? We see them ready to catch at every unwarrantable gratification of passion or appetite, to put every fraudulent or wicked scheme in execution, from which they are not restrained either by human laws, or by fear of losing the esteem and confidence of their fellow-creatures, with the advantages connected with it. What could they do more, if there was no God. Is there, taking mankind upon an average, one of an hundred, who hesitates at any vicious thought, word, or action, from the single consideration of its being perhaps displeasing to God? Is there one of an hundred, who habitually regulates his thoughts, words, and actions, by the standard of the Divine will, and would rather lose the favour and approbation of all the men on earth, and all the angels of heaven, than his Maker's alone? How seldom do we meet with an instance of a person, who will not truckle, and temporize, commute, and compound with conscience, or even stifle its remonstrances, to gain the favour of the great? Whereas, if men acted upon the principle of a rational belief of a God, they would rather make a point of giving up all human favour, to make sure of keeping strictly to their duty; they would take care always to be on the safe side, to be scrupulously exact, rather than too free, in their lives and conversations; they would labour, if possible, to  
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do more than the exact duty of their stations; and to avoid even the least appearance of evil; as they who would make their court to a prince, do not grudge any extraordinary service, attendance, or expence for him; are cautious of so much as seeming to look toward what may be disagreeable to his humour or inclination, or in the least favouring, or seeming to favour, those whom he does not approve. Did men in any rational and consistent manner believe the existence of a God, or think of him as the Governor and Judge of the world, under whose immediate inspection we stand at all moments, we should see their conduct corrected and regulated by that constant awe and fear, which becomes dependent accountable beings, whose minds are duly impressed with a sense of their present condition, and future expectations. Their belief would be practical as well as speculative. It would affect their hearts; as well as impress their understandings.

How some men contrive to satisfy their own minds upon the subject of their duty to God, is inconceivable. One would imagine it impossible for a being at all capable of thought to bring himself to believe, that, though he owes his existence, his body, his soul, his reasoning faculty, speech, and all his powers corporeal and mental, with whatever he enjoys now, or hopes for hereafter, to an infinitely perfect and amiable Being, who has made him capable of apprehending his perfections,

fections, and his absolute power over him; one would imagine it impossible, I say, for a being endowed with a reasoning faculty to believe all this, and yet think he owes no duty at all, no gratitude, love, or service, no positive adoration or praise to his Creator, Governor, and Judge. Yet is there, even in this enlightened age, and this land of knowlege, a person among an hundred, who makes conscience of regularly and habitually performing, in a rational and devout manner, the positive duties of meditation upon the Divine perfections, in order to raise his mind to an imitation of them; of addressing God by prayer for the supply of all his wants; or of praising him for the bounties received? On the contrary, is there not too much reason to conclude, that by far the greatest part of mankind have not God in all their thoughts, or if they have, the thought of him produces no visible effect? They attend the public worship indeed from a sense of decency. But it is plain, from their general levity of behaviour, that their hearts are not in it. And, as for worshipping God daily in their houses, with their families, or by themselves in their closets, they see no necessity for it, and conclude, that whoever lives soberly, and is good-natured, though he habitually neglects the whole third part of his duty, is likely to meet with the Divine approbation, and to be happy at last.

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It is proved above, that the Author of all things must be infinite in his essence, and in all possible perfections, as wisdom, power, goodness, and rectitude. If so, it is evident, not only that he is the proper object of the admiration, love, gratitude, and every other noble affection, of the minds of such low creatures as mankind, who are probably the meanest of all rational beings; but that it is the glory of the highest archangel in heaven to adore infinite perfection; nay, that the whole of the reverence, love, and praise of any conceivable number of created beings paid by them through all eternity, must fall infinitely short of what is justly his due; because the whole of the tribute of honour and service, which all created beings can pay, will be finite; whereas the Divine perfections are infinite; now every finite is infinitely deficient, when compared with what is infinite.

To be more particular; the consideration of the Divine immensity, or omnipresence, ought to strike every thinking mind with the most profound awe and veneration, which ought to dwell upon it constantly and habitually, of its being at all times surrounded with the Divinity, which pervades all matter, and is the Spirit within every spirit, seeing, or rather intimately feeling, every motion of every mind in the universe. Whoever has just and habitual impressions of the Divine omnipresence, will no more presume to do any thing amiss, or even to think a bad thought,  
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than a confiderate perfon will dare to behave rudely in the Royal prefence. A thinking mind confiders itfelf as at all times, by day and by night, in public and in private, abroad and at home, in the immediate and intimate prefence of the great King of the world, whose boundlefs palace is the whole univerfe. It will therefore be continually and habitually on its guard ; and, as one who appears before an illuftrious character, whose favour he greatly values, will be above all things fearful of mifbehaving ; fo will the confiderate mind dread the danger of lofing the approbation of that ever-prefent Judge, upon whom his fate depends, infinitely more than pain, or poverty, or fhame, or death, and will cheerfully expofe himfelf to any or all of them, rather than aft an unbecoming part before that eye, which is not to be deceived. He, who thinks how vice, or even frailty, muft appear before that Being, whose very nature is rectitude in perfection, and who knows not the leaft fhadow of error, or deviation ; can he think of voluntarily departing from the eternal rule of right, or allowing himfelf in any practice, which muft offend infinite Purity ?

The confideration of the eternity, or perpetual exiftence hereafter, of the Divinity, together with that of the neceffary immutability of his nature, fuggelts to the pious and well-difpofed mind the comfortable profpect, that after all the changes and revolutions which may happen to it, to the

kingdoms, and empires of this world, and to the world itself; after all the visible objects, which now are, have performed their courses, and are vanished, or renewed; after a period of duration long enough to obliterate from all human memory the idea of a sun, and stars, and earth; still he, who is now Governor of the universe, will continue to fill the supreme throne, and to rule with boundless and uncontrouled sway over his infinite dominions; and consequently, that whoever is so wise as to strive above all things to gain his favour, may depend upon being always secure of the enjoyment of the happiness assigned him by the general Judge, and that no change in the affairs even of the whole universe, will ever remove him from that station which has been appointed him. For the universal Governor will raise no one to happiness hereafter, but such as he finds qualified for it. Nor will the time ever come, when it will not be in his power to keep those beings happy, which he has once made so; for his dominion is an everlasting dominion, and of his kingdom there will never be an end. Nor will the time ever come, when he will change his purpose or scheme of government, or, like a weak earthly prince, degrade his favourites, or reverse his laws, to indulge uncertain caprice.

This shews the supreme Being to be a very proper object of the trust of all his creatures. Had I the favour of all the crowned heads in the world, it is evident, that in so short a time as a  
century

century hence, it must be of no manner of value to me. Death will, in all probability, before that short period be elapsed, remove every one of them, and myself too, into a state, in which no favour will be of any avail, but that of the King of kings, upon whom they must be as much dependent as I. But to trust to him who is eternal in his nature, and unchangeable in his purpose, and who has it in his power to make and keep his favourites eternally happy, is building upon a sure foundation.

Here it is to be remembered, that it is only in a course of obedience that we have any pretence to trust in God. All confidence in him, that is not founded in well-doing, is vain and presumptuous, and will in the end be disappointed. As the king on the throne has power to raise any person, whom he may judge worthy of honour, at the same time that it is vain and presumptuous to think of trusting to him in any other way, than such as may be likely to gain his favour; so, though the supreme King of the universe has power to raise any of his creatures to inconceivable happiness, it is not to be expected that he will bestow his favour upon any, but such as shall be found worthy of it. And his infinite wisdom will effectually prevent his being mistaken in his judgment of characters; and renders it impossible that he should bestow his approbation amiss. So that there is no ground of confidence for any, but those who make it their sincere and diligent en-

deavour to gain the Divine favour in the way which he has appointed.

It is impossible to survey, with a discerning eye, the world which we inhabit, without reading the illustrious characters of power, wisdom, and goodness, which the Divine hand has inscribed upon it, each of which attributes suggests to us a set of duties, and therefore deserves our particular consideration.

To create, or bring into existence, one particle of matter, which before was nothing, who can say what power is requisite? The difference between nothing and a real existence is strictly and properly infinite. Which seems to imply an infinite difficulty to be surmounted, before one particle of matter can be produced. And no power, inferior to infinite, is equal to an infinite difficulty. Be that as it will, it is unquestionable, that to produce great works, requires proportionable power. And if the works of nature are not great, there is no greatness conceivable. The calling forth a world into being, had it been from its creation to remain for ever at rest, had been an effect worthy of Divine power. But to give to a system so huge and unwieldy, any degree of motion, much more to give a motion inconceivably swift to masses of matter inconceivably bulky; to accommodate velocity to what is the most unfit for being moved with velocity; to whirl a whole earth, a globe of twenty-five thousand miles round, with all its mountains and  
oceans,

oceans, at the rate of near sixty-thousand miles an hour; to carry on such an amazing motion for many thousands of years; to keep six such bodies in continual motion, in different planes, and with different velocities, round a common centre, at the same time that ten others are revolving round them, and going along with them; what amazing power is requisite to produce such effects!

How do we admire the effects produced by a combination of mechanic powers (which also act by Divine power, or laws of nature) in raising weights, and overcoming the *vis inertiae* of matter? What should we think of a machine, constructed by human hands, by which St Paul's church, or a little hill, should be transported half a mile from its place, with ever so slow a motion? But the greatest mountain is no more in comparison with the whole earth, than a grain of sand to a mountain. Yet the whole cumbrous mass of earth has been whirled round the sun, for these five thousand years and upwards, with a rapidity frightful to think of, and for any thing we know, with undiminished force. And the comet in 1680-81, must, according to the *Newtonian* principles, have moved in its *perihelion*, or nearest approach to the sun, at the rate of above a million of miles in an hour, which was a flight near twenty times more rapid than that of the earth in its annual course. Now the swiftest speed of a horse, that ever has been known,

was at the rate of one mile in one minute, which continued, would give sixty miles in an hour, instead of more than a million, the comet's motion. The swiftest horse at full speed may move twenty foot in the time that one can pronounce *one*, or sixty foot, while one can say *one, two, three*. But to form some conception of the motion of the *Newtonian* comet, let the reader suppose himself placed upon such an eminence as will give him a prospect of fifty miles on each hand; the rapidity of that tremendous body in the swiftest part of its course, was such, that in the time of pronouncing one syllable, or in the twinkling of an eye, it would fly across that space of one hundred miles, while the swiftest horse would have proceeded twenty foot. Yet those enormous bodies are, by the parallax they give, supposed to be nearly of the magnitude of our globe of earth and ocean, and some of them perhaps larger.

Now there is nothing more evident, than that in proportion to the quantity of matter to be moved, and the velocity with which it is to be moved, such must be the moving force. Let the reader, therefore, if he has any talent in calculation, try to estimate the force required to give such a furious rapidity to bodies of such stupendous magnitude; if he has any imagination, let him fill it with the sublime idea of omnipotence; and if he has either reason or religion, let him  
 prostrate

prostrate his soul, and adore such tremendous and irresistible power.

Nor is less command of matter required to produce the astonishing appearances in the minute, than in the great world; to carry on the various secretions, circulations, and transmutations in vegetation, and the production, growth, and life of animals; especially, when the degree of minuteness is such, as it must be in an animalcule, of which millions would only equal the bulk of a grain of sand. What power is required to wing the rapid light from its fountain the sun to us in seven or eight minutes, with such a swiftness, that in the instant of pronouncing the word *light*, sixty thousand miles are passed through!

To a being possessed of rightful power over us, the proper duty is evidently fear, or awe, and the consequence of that is obedience. If we consider the Supreme being as possessed of infinite, or boundless power over all his creatures, we must see the indispensable necessity of the most profound submission to him, both in our dispositions and practice. If we consider him as our Creator, we must be convinced that he has an absolute right to us, and to all our services. If we think of him as irresistible, rebellion against him is a degree of madness beyond all computation. For what lasting and inconceivably dreadful punishments may not such power inflict upon those perverse and impenitent beings, who become the objects of his vengeance? And what chance can



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the worms of the earth have to deliver themselves out of the hands of the Almighty ?

There is no inconsistency between the fear we owe to God, and the duty of love. On the contrary, love ever implies a fear to offend the person beloved. As on one hand, nothing is so perfectly amiable as infinite-perfection, so neither is there any so proper object of fear, as he who is infinitely great and awful. And there is a wide difference between the slavish fear, which a criminal has for his judge, or that which a miserable subject has for a tyrant, and that of a son for an affectionate father. Of this last kind is the reverence with which we ought to think of our Creator. Only we must take the utmost care not to entertain any notion of God, as of one capable of any weakness resembling that of earthly parents. For it is certain, that the Judge of the world, whose rectitude and justice are absolutely perfect and inviolable, will not, cannot be misled, by fondness for his own creatures, to make the obdurately wicked happy. For, tho' he loves his creature, he loves justice more, and will not sacrifice his own eternal and immutable attribute for the sake of any number of worthless rebellious beings whatever.

As to the Divine wisdom appearing in the works of creation, we are peculiarly at a loss to conceive properly of it. For we come into a world ready finished, and fit to be inhabited; and therefore have no conception of the immense stretch

stretch of thought, the amazing depth of invention (if we may so speak) that was necessary to plan an universe. Let any man imagine the state of things before there was any created being, if ever such a time was; when there was no plan, no model, or pattern to proceed upon; when the very idea of a universe, as well as the particular plan and execution of it, was to be drawn, so to speak, out of the Divine imagination. Let the reader suppose himself to have been first produced, and to have had it revealed to him by his Creator, that a universe was to be created. A universe! What idea could he have formed of a universe? Had he been consulted upon the plan of it, which part would he have begun at? Before light existed, could he have conceived the idea of light? Before there was either sun, stars, or earth, could he have formed any conception of a sun, stars, or earth? Could he have contrived light for the eye, or the eye for light? Could he have suited a world to its inhabitants, or inhabitants to a world? Could he have fitted bodies to minds, or minds to bodies?

If the reader should not clearly enough see the difficulty of inventing and planning an universe from nothing, nor the wondrous foresight and comprehensive wisdom, that was necessary for fitting an almost infinite number of things to one another, in such a manner, that every particular should answer its particular end, and fill its particular place, at the same time that it should contribute

tribute to promote various other designs ; if the depth of wisdom, which has produced all this, does not sufficiently appear to the reader, let him try to form a plan of a new world, quite different from all that he knows of in the present universe, in which none of our elements, nor light, nor animal life, nor any of the five senses, nor respiration, nor vegetation shall have any place. And when he has used his utmost efforts, and put his invention upon the utmost stretch, and finds that he cannot form a shadow of one single idea, of which the original is not drawn from nature ; then let him confess his own weakness, and adore that boundless wisdom, which has produced, out of its own infinite fertility of invention, enough to employ, and to confound the utmost human sagacity.

Have not the most acute penetration, and indefatigable industry of the wise and learned of all ages, been employed (and how could they more worthily) in searching out the wonderful works of the Almighty maker of the universe ? and have they yet found out one single article to the bottom ? Can all the philosophers of modern times, who have added to the observations of the ancients, the discoveries made by their own industry and sagacity ; can they give a satisfying account of the machinery of the body of a fly, or a worm ? Can they tell what makes two particles of matter cohere ? Can they tell what the substance of a particle of matter is ? Is the science  
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of physiology, delightful and noble as it is, and worthy of the study of angels, is it carried any farther than a sett of observations, wonderful indeed, and striking, but as to real causes, and internal natures, altogether in the dark? How do we admire, and justly, the exalted genius of our seemingly inspired philosopher, for going a pitch beyond the sagacity of all mankind in discovering the laws, by which the vast machine of the world is governed? Yet he modestly owns the cause of attraction and gravitation to lie too deep for his penetration. How do we stand astonished at the acuteness of a mind, which could pursue calculations to a degree of subtlety beyond the reach of by far the greatest part of mankind to follow him in, even after he has shewn the way? What then ought we to think of that wisdom, which in its meanest productions baffles the deepest penetration of a capacity, whose acuteness baffles the general understanding of mankind?

From the consideration of the wisdom we trace in the natural world, it is manifest, past all doubt, that the moral system (for the sake of which that of nature was brought into existence) is under the same conduct, and will hereafter appear to be a scheme altogether worthy of God. For either both, or neither, must be the contrivance of Divine wisdom. We cannot conceive of God as partly, or by halves, but wholly, the Creator and Governor of all beings, natural and moral. And if so, we may be assured, that, as in the  
system

system of nature, final causes are fitted to produce their effects, and every part of the machine of the world is properly adjusted to its place and purpose, so in the moral, every rational being will be determined to the state and place he is found fit for; the good to happiness, and the wicked to punishment; the highly elevated and purified mind to a high and eminent station; and the corrupt and sordid to shame and misery; the soul, which has perfected its faculties, and refined its virtues, by imitation of the Divine perfections, to the conversation of angels and the beatific vision of God, and that which has by vice debauched and sunk itself below the brutes, to the place of dæmons and fallen spirits. And all this may probably proceed as much according to the original constitution of things, as a cause produces its effect in the natural world; as fire produces the dissipation of the parts of combustible substances; as nourishment tends to the support of animal life; and as matter tends to decay. So that the only thing which hinders a wicked embodied mind from being now in torments, may be, its being still embodied, and not yet let out into the world of spirits, where a new and dreadful scene will of course immediately open upon it, as soon as it comes to be divested of the earthly vehicle, which now conceals those invisible horrors, and protects it from its future tormentors. And in the same manner, the virtuous and exalted mind would be now in a state

of happiness, if it were not prevented from the commerce of blessed spirits, and the view of the invisible world, by the impenetrable veil of flesh which surrounds it. But this supposition does not at all affect the doctrine of positive rewards and punishments, nor of separate places appointed for receiving the good, and the wicked, after the final judgment.

If we find the mere material system of nature to be wrought by a degree of wisdom altogether beyond our comprehension, it would be madness to suppose that we shall ever have sagacity enough to baffle the Divine scheme in the moral government of the world; that we shall be able to contrive any way of escaping from the punishment we may deserve. No. His counsel will stand; and he will do all his pleasure. It will not be in our power to deceive his penetration, to get out of his reach, or to defend ourselves against his justice.

To frame some idea of the Divine goodness in the creation of the world, it will be necessary to go back in imagination to the ages which preceded all creation, if such there were, or, however, to those, which were prior to the production of our world. Let us then view the awful Majesty of heaven surrounded with ineffable glory, and enthroned in absolute perfection, beyond conception blessed in the consciousness of unbounded plenitude. What motive could influence him, who already enjoyed complete perfection

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tion and happiness, to call unsubstantial nothing into existence? What could be the views of infinite wisdom in speaking a world into being? No prospect of any addition to his own perfection or happiness: for that which was already infinite, what addition could it receive? Could the adorable Creator propose to be more than infinitely perfect and happy? It is evident, his sole view must have been to the happiness of the creatures he was to produce. His own was ever, and ever must be, unbounded, undiminished, and unchanged. The addition of happiness therefore, which was to be produced, was to be bestowed upon those who were not yet created. Does then Divine goodness extend to that which has no existence? Does the universal Parent think of what is not? We, poor, narrow souls! think it a mighty stretch of benevolence, if we can bring ourselves to regard with some measure of affection those of our fellow-creatures, who stand most nearly connected with us; in loving whom, we do little more than love ourselves, or love our friends and relations for our own sakes. If there be a mind yet more generous, it may take in its country, or the human species. A benevolence still more extensive may perhaps enlarge itself so wide as to comprehend within its generous embrace the various orders of being which form the universal scale; descending from the flaming seraph to the humble reptile. Nor indeed can any mind sincerely love the Almighty

mighty maker; and hate, or despise any of the works of the same hand, which formed itself. But the Divine benevolence is as far beyond all this, as infinitude is larger than any limited space. How peevish, and apt to take offence at every trifling injury, are narrow-hearted mortals! Yet what are the insults, our fellow-worms can offer us, when compared with the atrociousness of an offence committed by the dust of the earth against the infinite Majesty of the universe? Though the omniscient Creator from eternity foresaw, that the creatures, he was to form, would prove rebellious and disobedient; that they would violate all his wise and sacred laws, and insult his sovereign honour, as Governor of the world; has he grudged to give them existence; to bestow upon them a temporary happiness; to make his sun shine, and his rain descend on all promiscuously; and put it in the power of all to attain perfection, happiness, and glory? What neglect of every duty and obligation; how many acts of fraud, oppression, and cruelty; how many horrid execrations, and infernal blasphemies, does every day record against the daring race of men around the world? Yet seldom does the Divine vengeance break loose upon the impious offenders. Our wicked species, if there were no other lawless order of creatures in the universe, are ever offending. And yet the thunder seldom strikes the guilty dead. Earthquakes and inundations are rarely let loose. A few cities purged by fire, and a world cleansed  
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by a deluge once in six thousand years, serve just to put unthinking mortals in remembrance that there is a power above them. So that every moment of the duration of the world is an universal witness declaring to all the nations of the earth, in a language distinctly intelligible to all, the goodness of the Maker and Governor of the universe. At the same time that the prince of angels receives from the immediate communications of the Divine goodness, beatitude past utterance, the humble peasant rejoices in his bounty, with which the fields are enriched, and the fair face of nature adorned. Even the lonely savage in the wilderness, the sordid reptile in the dust, and the scaly nations, which people the unfathomable deep, all taste of the bounty; and are supported by the unlimited goodness, of the universal Parent, who opens his unwearied hand liberally, and satisfies every living soul.

If human understanding apprehends any thing according to truth and right, the benevolent character is the proper object of the love of every rational mind, as the contrary is the natural object of aversion. If every human, or other finite mind, is more or less amiable; according as it has more or less of this excellent disposition; it is evident, that infinite goodness is infinitely amiable. Who is he, that pretends to think and reason, and has no pleasure in contemplating the Divine goodness? Who can reflect upon such goodness, and not admire it? Who can admire;  
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and not endeavour to imitate it? Who can imitate it, and not be an universal blessing? Who can be an universal blessing, and not be happy?

If the Divine goodness be evidently disinterested, it being impossible that the smallest happiness should, from any enjoyed by the creatures, be added to that of the Creator, which is necessarily infinite, it is plain, what makes real and perfect goodness of disposition in any mind, viz. A propensity to contribute to the happiness of others without any view to self-interest. In so far as a view to one's own happiness is the motive to his exerting himself for the good of his fellow-creatures, in so far it has less of the truly worthy and commendable in it. For self-love, being merely instinctive, has nothing praise-worthy. And to promote the happiness of others for the sake of adding to one's own, is what the most selfish and sordid character is capable of. To be truly benevolent, is to imitate the Deity; to do good for the sake of doing good; to be bountiful from the disposition of the mind, from universal love and kindness, from rational considerations of the intrinsic excellence of that Godlike disposition; not from mere weak and effeminate softness of nature.

It is strange that ever it should have been questioned, whether it is reasonable for dependent creatures to address themselves to their infinite Creator for the supply of their wants. Yet books have been written to shew the unreason-

ableness of prayer. "The supreme Being," says an objector, "knows whether I am worthy to receive favours at his hand, and what I most need, before I apply to him. If I am worthy, he will bestow, whether I ask or not: if not, he will not be prevailed on by any solicitation to bestow upon an unworthy object. If I ask what is unfit for me, he is too wise and good to grant it; and if I ask what is fit, I gain nothing; for he would have bestowed it upon me of his own goodness, without my asking."

There cannot be a more egregious fallacy than that, on which this objection is founded. For it is evident, that, if it be rational to think of ourselves as beings dependent upon the Supreme, it is rational for us to express our dependence; if it be reasonable for us to express our dependence on our Creator, it is unjustifiable in us to neglect it; so that I can in no propriety of speech be said to be a worthy object of the Divine favour, till I actually address myself to him. Again, it is evident, that no degree of homage, or submission, ought to be wanting from dependent creatures to their Creator. But the service of both body and mind is a greater degree of homage, than that of the mind alone. So that till I yield the bodily homage, as well as that of the mind, my service is deficient, which renders me an unworthy object of the Divine favour.

It is likewise remarkable, that many of the more rational and pious writers on this subject, have

have laboured to represent the whole *rationale* of the duty of prayer as consisting in the advantage which is thereby to accrue to the worshiper by improvement in piety and goodness. It is true, that the moral effects likely to be produced by the constant observance of this most important duty, are of great and inestimable consequence, which render it a most useful instrument for those noble purposes. Did men habitually observe the practice of addressing themselves to their Creator with an awful sense of his infinite greatness and authority over them ; such a fixed impression must in time be thereby made upon their minds, as would prove a restraint from vice, at all times, and in all cases, equally powerful. Did people make a point of applying constantly and regularly to the Giver of every good gift, they could hardly miss entertaining in their minds an habitual sense of their absolute dependence upon him ; of gratitude for his bounties received ; and of studying obedience, in order to his future favour. What man could be so hardened as to go on daily lamenting and confessing his offences, and daily repeating them ? Who could presumptuously be guilty of a crime, which he knew he must the same day confess to his all-seeing Judge, and implore the pardon of it ? He, who kept up this constant intercourse with his Creator, must find himself very powerfully influenced by it, and improved in every pious and worthy disposition. But besides all this, it is

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evidently in itself a reasonable service ; and is to be considered not only as a noble and valuable means of moral improvement, but as a positive act of virtue ; it being as proper virtue to render to God the honour and worship due to him, as to give to men their just rights. And to withhold from him what he has the most unquestionable title to, being as much an injustice (with the atrocious addition of its being committed against the Greatest and Best of beings) as to withhold from a fellow-creature his just property. There is also plainly a connexion in nature and reason, between asking and receiving, and between neglecting to ask and not receiving. This natural connexion makes it reasonable for dependent creatures to expect to obtain their reasonable requests ; and to conclude, that what they do not think it worth while to ask, they shall not receive. If there were not such a connexion and foundation in reason for this duty, it had never been commanded by the all-wise Law-giver of the universe ; nor come to be universally practised by the wisest and best of mankind, in all ages and nations. Nor is there any greater difficulty in conceiving the possibility of a pre-establiſhed scheme in the Divine oeconomy, according to which the blessings of heaven, whether of a spiritual or temporal nature, should be granted to those who should ask, and be found fit to receive them ; than in any other instance of providence,

vidence; or than in the future happiness of the good part of mankind, and not of the wicked.

If the supreme Being be One, he is the proper object of the adoration of all reasonable beings, because, having all things in his absolute disposal, without possibility of being thwarted or controuled by any one, if we can gain his goodwill, we cannot want that of any other. If He be kind and good in the most disinterested manner, and to the highest degree, even extending his bounty to the wicked and rebellious, and preserving them in existence, who make no use of their existence, but to offend Him; it is reasonable to hope, that he will lend a propitious ear to the humble requests of the virtuous and pious part of his creatures. If He has all things in his power; and can bestow without measure gifts both spiritual and temporal, without diminishing his inexhaustible riches; to apply to Him is going where we are sure we shall not be disappointed, through want of ability to supply us. If He is every where present, we may be sure of being heard, wherever we make our addresses to him. If He is within our very minds, we cannot raise a thought toward him, but he must perceive it. If He is infinitely wise, he knows exactly what is fit for us, and will grant such of our petitions as may be proper to be bestowed upon us, and withhold whatever may prove hurtful, though we have asked it. If it be reasonable to suppose, that he expects all his thinking creatures to apply

to him, we may do it with this comfortable consideration, to encourage us; that in addressing him, we are doing what is agreeable to his nature and will; and cannot offend him, but by our manner of performing it. Were I to have an audience of a prince, it would give me great encouragement to know that he was graciously disposed toward me, that I should not offend him by begging his favour and protection; but that on the contrary, he expected I should petition him, and would even take it amiss if I did not; that he had it fully in his power, as well as in his inclination, to grant me the greatest favour I should have occasion to ask him; and that it was his peculiar delight to oblige and make his subjects happy. There are few princes, of whom most of these things may be said; and none of whom all may be affirmed. And yet they find, to their no small trouble and incumbrance, that for the few inconsiderable perishing favours they have in their power, there are petitioners almost innumerable. Whilst the infinitely good Giver of all things, whose disposition, and whose power, to bestow happiness inconceivable, are equally boundless; is neglected, and defrauded of that homage and devotion, to which all his creatures ought to be drawn by a sense of their own absolute dependence upon him; of his ability and readiness to bestow; of his authority, who has commanded them to make their requests to him; and by the spontaneous dictates  
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of their own minds, directing them to the performance of a duty so easy, so reasonable, and so promising of the most important advantages.

Though the principal part of prayer is petition, or addressing heaven for the supply of our various wants for life and futurity, there are other branches, as confession of our infirmities and faults; thanksgiving for the various instances we have received of the Divine goodness; and intercession for our fellow-creatures. The subject of our petitions for ourselves, ought to be, the necessities of this life, for which the rich, as well as the poor, depend daily on the Divine bounty; and the Divine assistance toward our being fitted for happiness hereafter. The first, if we judge wisely, we shall ask with great submission, and in moderation, as being of less consequence, and too apt to have bad effects upon our moral characters, when liberally bestowed. The latter, being of infinite consequence to us, we may request with more earnestness and importunity.

If we give the least attention to our own characters, we must find our thoughts often trifling and wicked, our words foolish and mischievous, and our actions criminal before God. If we have any consideration, we cannot but think ourselves deplorably deficient in the performance of our duty with regard to ourselves, our fellow-creatures, and our Creator. If we are in reason obliged to think often of the fatal errors of our lives, to view and review them attentively, with



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all their heavy aggravations, and to mourn and lament them in our own minds; if all this be highly proper and reasonable, it is more peculiarly reasonable to acknowledge our offences before Him, whom we have offended; to implore his pardon, who alone can forgive, and deprecate his vengeance, which we have so justly deserved. We ourselves, when offended by a fellow-creature, expect that he should not only be convinced in his own mind of his misbehaviour, and speak of it with concern to others; but likewise, that he come, and make a direct acknowledgment, and ask our pardon. Nor is there any thing unreasonable in all this. How much more, when we have offended Him who is infinitely above us, and from whom we have every thing to fear, if we do not, by sincere repentance, and thorough reformation, avert the deserved punishment. Especially, if we consider that the performance of this duty tends naturally to lead us to real repentance and reformation.

As we ought in our prayers to confess our faults and errors, and that not in general terms, but with particular reflection, in our own minds, upon the principal and grossest of them, which every true penitent has ever upon his heart, and before his eyes; so ought we in all reason to return our sincere thanks to the universal Benefactor, expressly for every particular signal instance of his favour, whether those, in which mankind

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in general share with us, or those in which we have been distinguished from others.

If we have upon our minds a due and habitual sense of our offences, we shall of ourselves be willing to make confession of them. If we have any gratitude in our nature, we shall not fail to express our acknowledgments for favours received. And if we have any real benevolence for our fellow-creatures, we shall be naturally led to think it our duty to present to the common Father of all our good wishes for them; that they may be favoured with every blessing, which may tend to promote universal happiness spiritual and temporal.

If it be at all rational to worship God by prayer, it is obviously so to join together at proper times in that sublime exercise. The advantages of public assemblies for religious purposes, are, the impressing more powerfully upon the minds of the worshipers, the sublimity and importance of the duty they are employed in; and the powerful effects of universal example. It is pretty evident, that the public worship on Sundays is what chiefly keeps up the little appearance of religion that is still left among us. I think there is no good reason against keeping up in public worship as much pomp and magnificence as may be consistent with propriety, and so as to avoid ostentation and superstition. We are, in our present state, very mechanical, and need all proper helps for drawing our inclinations along with our duty,

duty, for engaging our attention, and making such impressions upon us, as may be lasting and effectual. Public worship ought to be so conducted, as to be most likely to prepare us for a more numerous society, in which more sublime exercises of devotion, than any we are now capable of conceiving of, may be a considerable part of our employment, and happiness.

Did our leading people think rightly, they would see the advantages of giving their attendance themselves at places of public worship, and using their influence, and authority, to draw others to follow the same laudable example. Deplorable are the excuses and apologies made by them for their too general and infamous neglect of the unquestionable duty of attending the public worship of God. Nor would it be easy to determine, whether their practice shews more want of sense or of goodness. One mighty pretence made by them is, That, as to public instructions, truly they hold themselves to be as good judges of moral and Divine subjects as the clergy; and therefore think it lost time to give their attention to any thing, which may be delivered from the pulpit. Now, it seems at least not very probable, that people, who spend most of their time (Sundays not excepted) at the card-table, should as thoroughly understand the extensive sciences of morals, and theology, as the public teachers of religion, who have spent many years wholly in those studies. Those very persons,

sions, when they chance to be overtaken with sickness, are very ready to call in physicians, and do not pretend to understand, as well as they, who have made physic their study, the nature and cure of diseases. But were it strictly true, that the polite people of our age are so wise, that they are not like to hear any thing new, nor any known truth set in a new light by any preacher; still is it not an advantage to have a set of good thoughts, which lay dormant in the mind, excited and called up to the attention of the understanding by an elegant and judicious discourse? Were there likewise nothing in this, what public-spirited person would not even go out of his way for the sake of setting a good example before the young and ignorant, who want instruction, if he does not. But when all is said, here is no pretence for neglecting the public *worship* of God, which is one principal end of religious assemblies. So that those, who habitually throw contempt upon this part of duty, are evidently guilty of a breach of common decency, and natural religion, and are altogether without excuse.

If public worship, in which the inhabitants of a whole quarter join together, be reasonable; it seems as much so, that families should set apart stated times daily for that purpose. We are social beings, and ought to be social in all things that are commendable. And if heads of families are in reason obliged to take care, that their children and dependents have opportunity of consulting

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sulting the interests of a future life, and of being led by example, or moved by authority, to the observance of their duty ; it is obvious, that in this important one of worshipping God, persons in stations of authority and example ought by no means to be wanting, lest the failures (through their bad example) of those, over whom they have had charge, be hereafter justly imputed to their negligence.

The usual excuses for the neglect of family-religion, made even by many, who do not deny its usefulness and propriety, are, want of time ; and a certain foolish reluctance at performing the duty of addressing their Creator in presence of others. As to the former, there is no well-regulated house, in which the family cannot be called together for half-an-hour before the business, or the pleasure, of the day comes on, to address their Creator for his blessing and favour through the day ; and the same at night, to join in thanking him for the mercies of the day. That time must be employed in some way different from what has been yet heard of, which is applied better than to the service of God. If we can find time for eating, drinking, dressing, merchandizing, or cards ; to pretend to want time for worshipping God, is monstrous.

As for the other objection against keeping up the worship of God in families, it is almost too frivolous to deserve any answer at all. Surely nothing is easier, than to choose out a few proper

per passages from Scripture, or, with the help of the common-prayer of the church, and other books of devotion almost innumerable; to compile a set of devotions suited to the use of a family, and for the master of the house, kneeling or standing, with his children and domestics about him, to pronounce them with proper devotion, the rest joining mentally, or with a low voice, in every petition. If any master of a family chooses to compose a set of devotions for his own use, I will only mention one direction, which might render them more useful, than they could otherwise be. It is, that in them, the moral virtues, or duties of temperance, benevolence, and piety, might be so worked into the petitions, that, in praying for the Divine grace and assistance to perform their duty, they should be led to reflect upon it, and put in mind to examine themselves whether they make conscience of performing it. By this means the daily devotions in the family might partly answer the end of homilies or instructions.

Who does not see, that the natural consequences of such an oeconomy, constantly kept up in houses, are likely to be, the promoting of fidelity in domestics, obedience in children, and drawing down the Divine blessing upon families; and, on the contrary, that a society, in which no regard is shewn to the Supreme being, is not likely to be blest with the Divine favour or protection?

That all devotions in which others are to join with the person, who utters them, even in a private family, are better pre-composed than spoken extempore, seems to me very clear. There are extremely few, even among men of the best abilities, who are capable of uttering fluently, and without hesitation, tautology, or some kind of impropriety, an unstudied speech of any length. And that a speech made in public to God himself should be ill-digested, must be owned to be very gross. For it is evident, that in such a case, the speaker, instead of leading along with him the devotion of his hearers, must confound and distract it. And it seems enough in any reason, that the speaker have the manner, and delivery to attend to, without his being obliged at the same time to study the matter.

The supplication of a single person by himself, is, in my opinion, more properly presented in his own thoughts or words, than in those of any other ; Though the reading of books of devotion are useful helps to those whose thoughts want to be helped out.

What can be more rational, more sublime, or more delightful, than for a dependent creature to raise his thoughts to his Creator ; to fill his mind with a sense of the present Divinity ; to pour forth his soul before Him who made it ? What so great honour can an humble mortal enjoy, as to be allowed to speak to God ? What exercise can the rational soul engage in, so worthy the exer-

tion of its noblest powers and faculties, as addressing the Majesty of heaven? How can it, in this present state, approach so near to the Author of its being; or rise to an enjoyment so much resembling the beatific vision, as by this sublime converse with the omnipresent Deity? To swell the thought with the infinite greatness of the Object of worship; to consider one's self as addressing that tremendous Power, whose word produced the universe; to think that one is going to prostrate his soul before Him who formed it, who is to be its judge, and has the power of disposing of it for eternity! — What can be conceived so wonderfully awful and striking? But to reflect, that the glorious Object of worship, tho' infinitely exalted above the adoration of angels and archangels, is yet ready to hear, and bestow happiness upon the meanest of his rational creatures; to think that the humble petition of the sincere penitent will not be rejected; that the poor and needy are no more beneath his notice, or out of the reach of his goodness, than the rich and the mighty; what can be more comfortable? If God is the awful judge of mankind, he is also the merciful Father of mankind. If his eye is too pure to behold presumptuous vice without abhorrence, and too piercing to be deceived by the most artful hypocrisy; it is also open to look with pity upon the prostrate mourner, and his goodness ready to forgive the humble penitent what he cannot forgive himself.



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Be no longer, unthinking mortal, so much thy own enemy, as to exclude thyself from the highest honour thy nature is capable of. Aspire to the sublime happiness of conversing with thy Maker. Enlarge thy narrow mind to take in the thought of him for whom thou art made. Call forth all that is within thee to magnify and praise Him. Humble thyself to the dust, in the contemplation of his unequalled Majesty. Open the inmost recesses of thy soul to Him who gave it being. Expose to Him, who knows thy frame, thy weaknesses and thy faults. Think not to conceal or palliate them before that eye which is not to be deceived. Hast thou offended? Make no delay to confess before thy Creator and thy Judge, what he already knows. Tho' he already knows thy folly, he expects thy own confession of it, and that thou deprecate his vengeance. Though he may already have thoughts of mercy for thee, it is only on condition, that thou humbly implore it, and by repentance and amendment shew thyself worthy of it. Art thou weak and helpless? If thou knowest thyself, thou feelest it. Address thyself then to Him who is almighty, that his power may support thee. Art thou ignorant and short-sighted? If thou dost not think thyself so, thou art blind indeed. Apply then to Him, whose knowledge is infinite, that thou mayst be wise in his wisdom. Art thou in want of all things? If thou thinkest otherwise, thou art wretched indeed. Have recourse then

to Him who is the Lord of all things, and is possessed of inexhaustible riches. If thou hast a just sense of thy own state, if thou hast proper conceptions of thy Creator and Judge, or if thou hast a soul capable of any thought worthy the dignity of a reasonable immortal nature, thou wilt make it thy greatest delight to worship and adore Him, whom to serve is the glory of the brightest seraph in the celestial regions.

A numerous assembly of people, celebrating with grateful hearts the praises of their almighty Creator and bountiful Benefactor, may be, for any thing we can conceive, one of the best emblems of some part of the future employment and happiness of immortal spirits, which the present state can exhibit. It were well, if we could, by the mere force of cool reason, so elevate our conceptions of the Divinity, as worthily to magnify him in our public assemblies. But so long as we continue the mechanical beings we are, we must be willing to use all possible helps for working ourselves up to what our imperfect faculties of themselves are not generally speaking equal to, or however are not at all times in a condition for. Whoever understands human nature, knows, of what consequence associations are. And it is wholly owing to the infirmities of our nature and present state, that a due regard to decency and solemnity in public worship, is of such importance towards our moral improvement. Considering these things, it is with concern I must

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observe upon the manner of performing the solemn office of praising God in our public assemblies, that it very much wants reformation. I know of no application of music to this sublime use, that is not sadly deficient, except what is composed in the manner of anthems. For as in every piece of sacred poesy, there are various and very different tastes, and strains, it is evident, that to apply the same returning sett of notes to all alike is inconsistent, and not expressive of the sense and spirit of the piece, The eighteenth Psalm, for example, is one of the noblest hymns in Holy Scripture. From the beginning to the fourth verse, the royal author expresses his, or the Messiah's joy and gratitude for his deliverance from his enemies. It is evident, that the music, which is to accompany this part of the piece, ought to be bold, cheerful, and triumphant. Else it will disguise and misrepresent the thoughts, instead of expressing them. The fourth and fifth verses express the psalmist's, or Messiah's, dreadful distress, by the cruelty of wicked men, or evil spirits. It is plain, that the triumphant strains of music, which suited the former part, are not at all proper to express this; but that on the contrary, it requires a sett of the most dreary and horrid sounds which music can utter. The sixth verse represents the sacred writer's, or Messiah's, complaint in his great distress. To express this suitably, neither of the former species of melody is proper; but a sett of melancholy and plaintive

tive notes. The seventh, and some of the following verses, give an account of the Divine appearance in answer to the foregoing prayer, attended with earthquakes, tempests, lightnings, and all the terrors of Omnipotence. Every one of which images ought to be represented by a strain of music, properly adapted to the sense, in taste and expression. But to chant this whole piece, as is done at cathedral churches, or to sing it, as at parish churches, and meetings, to the same set of notes, returning through every succeeding verse, is not performing the piece so well as if the preacher were to read it to the people. For a person of a good elocution would utter it in such a manner, as at least should not disguise or misrepresent the sense, as is the affect of applying to it unsuitable, or bad music, which is worse than none. But, to those, who find proper sentiments excited in their minds by the more imperfect ways of performing the Divine praises, I have nothing to say, to lessen the satisfaction they have. I only would shew what is the most effectual and perfect way of applying music to religious purposes. And, after all, a proper disposition of mind is the principal thing, without which no bodily service can be acceptable to infinite Purity.

To conclude, it is evident, that our duty to our Creator is, as above observed, the most important, and noblest part of what we ought to study, and practise, in order to attain the true

dignity of human nature. For that infinite Being, by whom, and for whom we are, though in his essence invisible, in his nature incomprehensible, in his perfections inconceivable, does yet present himself to all our perceptions, bodily and mental. Every object we behold, every sound we hear, every bodily substance we touch, every subject of thought, must be either himself, or the work of his power. Our senses, whenever we exert them, are employed upon some creature of Omnipotence; and when the mind abstracts itself from all the bodily operations, even then it apprehends, it sees, it feels, the sustaining, informing, and invigorating power within it. It finds itself surrounded with the immensity of Divinity, and that itself and all things are established on that universal basis of existence; that all things are full of Deity; and that his presence is the Mind within the mind.

How amazing then the stupidity of numbers of the human species! An order of beings formed with a capacity for apprehending the Creator and Governor of the universe; for contemplating the most delightful and most striking of all subjects; for having their minds enlarged and ennobled by being habituated to the grand ideas of immensity, of wisdom, goodness, power, and glory unbounded and unlimited! Yet how do numbers of them pass through life, without ever endeavouring to form any just notions of that Being on whom they depend for their very existence;

istence; without ever thinking of any duty they may owe him, or any consequence of gaining or losing his favour! What stupendous glories, what wondrous perfections, what sublime contemplations, are lost to the gross and insensible minds of many of our species! How is the only Being, who possesses existence in himself, over-looked by those whom he himself has brought into being! How does he by whom all things exist, seem to such inconsiderate minds not to exist! How do the glories of his works, which were intended to point him out, conceal from such unthinking minds the glorious Maker! How do such ungrateful men basely take up with the gifts, without thinking on the all-bounteous Giver! How much are those men of gross and earthly dispositions their own enemies! How do they strive to feed their heaven-born minds with the unsatisfying and nauseous objects of sense, depriving them of that sublime entertainment, for which they were intended, and which is ever offering itself to them, the contemplation and enjoyment of Divinity, the possession of infinite perfection! Open thy narrow mind, unthinking mortal. Enlarge thy confined desires. Raise thy groveling ambition. Quit the trifling objects which now possess, and which will in the end disappoint thee. Trample under thy feet the wretched amusements of riches, honours, and pleasures; and aspire to what is worthy the dignity of thy nature, and thy divine original. It is thy Maker himself that is ready to take posses-

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sion of thy mind. It is the Divinity himself, that would pour into thy soul delights ineffable, that would dwell in thee, and join thee to himself in an eternal union, which will raise thee to bliss and glory above thy most extensive wishes, beyond thy most elevated conceptions.

### S E C T. IX.

*Miscellaneous Thoughts, and Directions, chiefly Moral.*

**I**F the reader should find, among the following aphorisms, some thoughts to much the same purpose with others, in other parts of this work; it is hoped, he will excuse such a repetition, in consideration of the variety of matter, and the usefulness of the subjects; which will bear being inculcated in the most copious manner.

It is not the part of a wise man to be eager after any thing, but improvement in goodness. All things else may be dispensed with.

To learn to talk well, learn first to hear.

Resist vice at the beginning, and you will conquer it in the end.

A clear conscience is better than a clear estate.

Never think a thought, speak a word, or do a deed, but what you may be safe in setting about with the following preface. "O God my Maker  
"and Judge, I do not forget, that thou art  
"witness to what I am about."

Has

Has not fashion a considerable share in the charities of the age? Let every one, who gives, carefully consider from what motives he acts.

If you have a well-disposed mind, you will go into no company more agreeable, or more useful, than your own. All is not well with those to whom solitude is disagreeable.

It is no shame to learn. The shame is to be ignorant.

Forgive every body rather than yourself.

If you have health, a competency, and a good conscience, what would you have besides? Something to disturb your happiness?

To expect, young men, that your life should be one continued series of pleasure, is to expect to meet with what no mortal, from *Adam* down to the present times, has yet met with; and what by the nature of things would be more strange, than the throwing the same number with a die ten millions of times successively.

When you hear in company, or read in a pamphlet, somewhat smart and lively, and quite new to you, urged against any opinion, or maxim allowed by men of the freest sentiments, and most improved understandings; do not let yourself be immediately perverted by it. But suppose, that, though it may be new to you, it may have been often started and answered; and though you cannot at once confute it, others can. And make it your business, if the point be of consequence, to find out those, who can. Nothing is more



weak, than to be staggered in your opinion by every trifle that may fall in your way.

Accustom yourself to think the greatest part of your life already past ; to contract your views and schemes, and set light by a vain and transitory state, and all its vain enjoyments.

To feel old age coming on, will so little mortify a wise man, that he can think of it with pleasure ; as the decay of nature shews him that the happy change of state, for which he has been all his life preparing himself, is drawing nearer. And surely it must be desirable, to find himself draw nearer to the end and the reward of his labours. The case of an old man, who has no comfortable prospect for futurity, and finds the fatal hour approaching, which is to deprive him of all his happiness ; is too deplorable for any words to represent.

It is easy to live well among good people. But shew me the man, who can preserve his temper, his wisdom, and his virtue, in spite of strong temptation and universal example.

It is hardly credible what acquisitions in knowledge one may make, by carefully husbanding and properly applying every spare moment.

Are you content to be for ever undone, if you should happen not to live till the time you have set for repentance ? If so, put it off a little longer, and take your chance.

It is a shame, if any person poorer than you is more contented than you.

Strive

## HUMAN NATURE. 263

Strive to excel in what is truly noble. Mediocrity is contemptible.

Judge of books, as of men. There is none wholly faultless, or perfect. That production may be said to be a valuable one, by the perusal of which a judicious reader may be the wiser and better; and is not to be despised for a few deficiencies, or inconsistencies.

Do not think of lying for the truth, or working the works of the Devil for God's sake.

Honesty sometimes fails: But it is because diligence or abilities are wanting. Otherwise it is naturally by far an over-match for cunning.

A bad reputation will lye a stumbling-block in your way to rising in life, and will disable you from doing good to others.

If ever you was dangerously ill, what fault or folly lay heaviest upon your mind? Take care to root it out, without delay, and without mercy.

An unjust acquisition is like a barbed arrow, that must be drawn backward with horrible anguish; else it will be your destruction.

To excel greatly in music, drawing, dancing, the pedantic parts of learning, play, and other accomplishments rather ornamental than useful, is beneath a gentleman, and shews, that to acquire such perfection in trifles, he must have employed himself in a way unworthy the dignity of his station. The peculiar accomplishments, in which a man of rank ought to shine, are knowledge of the world, acquired by history, travel, conversation,

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conversation, and business; of the constitution, interest, and laws of his country; and of morals and religion; without excluding such a competent understanding of other subjects, as may be consistent with a perfect mastery of the accomplishments which make the gentleman's proper calling.

The meanest spirit may bear a slight affliction, And in bearing a great calamity, there is great glory, and a great reward.

A wise man will improve by studying his own past follies. For every slip will discover some weakness still uncorrected, which occasioned his misbehaviour; and will set him upon effectually redressing every failure.

There is somewhat arch in the *Roman* catholics putting their carnivals before Lent. Mirth is generally the prelude of repentance.

To be drawn into a fault shews human frailty. To be habitually guilty of folly shews a corrupt mind. To love vice in others is the spirit of a devil, rather than a man; being the pure, disinterested love of vice, for its own sake. Yet there are such characters.

Remember, your bottle-companions will not bear you company at your death; nor lighten your sentence at the dreadful day of judgment. Let the vicious therefore go alone at present; since their company may heighten, but will not abate your punishment.

Proofs

## HUMAN NATURE. 265

Proofs of genuine repentance are, abstaining from all temptations to the same vice; thorough reformation; and all possible reparation.

Take care of those vices which resemble virtues.

To abuse the poor for his poverty is to insult God's providence.

Seek virtue rather than riches. You may be sure to acquire the first; but cannot promise for the latter. No one can rob you of the first without your consent; you may be deprived of the latter a hundred ways. The first will gain you the esteem of all good and wise men; the latter will get you flatterers enough; but not one real friend. The first will abide by you for ever; the latter will leave you at death, to shift, as you can, for eternity.

Moral truths are as certain as mathematical. It is as certain, that good is not evil, nor evil good, as that a part is less than the whole, or that a circle is not a triangle.

What matter what you know, if you do not know yourself?

It is pity that most people overdo either the active or contemplative part of life. To be continually immersed in business, is the way to become forgetful of every thing truly noble and liberal. To be wholly engaged in study, is to lose a great part of the usefulness of a social nature. How much better would it be, if people  
would

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would temper action with contemplation, and use action as a relief to study?

You may easily know, whether you are in earnest about reforming, and living virtuously. If you be, you will fly from every temptation to vice, and carefully pursue every help to virtue. As you may know whether you love money, by observing, whether you carefully pursue the means for getting and cautiously avoid occasions of expence or loss.

Never force nature. When study becomes a burden, give it over for that time. You will not improve by it, if it goes against the grain.

Preserve, if you can, the esteem of the wise and good. But more especially your own. Consider how deplorable a condition of mind you will be in, when your conscience tells you, you are a villain.

It is not eating a great quantity of food, that nourishes most: Nor devouring of books, that gives solid knowledge. It is what you digest, that feeds both body and mind. Have your learning in your head; and not in your library.

You had better find out one of your own weaknesses, than ten of your neighbour's.

There is only one single object you ought to pursue at all adventures: That is virtue: All other things are to be sought conditionally. What sort of man must he be, who resolves to be rich, or great, at any rate?

If

If you give only with a view to the gratitude of those you oblige, you deserve to meet with ingratitude. If you give from truly disinterested motives, you will not be discouraged or tired out by the worst returns.

Rather be the bubble, than the biter.

Do your duty, if the world should laugh. Obedience to the Almighty Governor of the universe, is what one would hardly think, should draw ridicule upon a man. But however, if men will be so absurd, as to laugh at you for what is your greatest wisdom; wait patiently the final issue, and then it will be seen who acted the ridiculous part.

If it should be hard to do your duty, it is evidently not impossible. To mention none of the Christian heroes, there is not a virtue which the Heathens have not shewn to be practicable. Do not pretend that a Christian cannot be chaste, when you know that young *Scipio* bravely resisted a most powerful temptation of that kind, in yielding to which, he would have acted only according to the custom of those times. Do not pretend that it is impossible for a Christian to forgive injuries, when you know, that *Phocion*, going to suffer death unjustly, charged it upon his son, with his last breath, that he should shew no resentment against his father's persecutors. Do not excuse yourself in giving up the truth, through fear of offending those, on whom you depend, when you know that *Attilius Regulus*

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*Regulus* gave himself up to tortures, and death, rather than falsify his word even to his enemies. Let it not be said that a Christian, with his clear views of an over-ruling Providence, shall be overcome with affliction, or impiously murmur against the great disposer of all things, when we find an *Epictetus*, sunk in misery and slavery, vindicating the Divine disposal of himself, and subduing his mind to the dispensations of Providence. Do not excuse yourself from a little expence, trouble, or hazard of ill-will, for the general good, when you know, that a *Leonidas*, a *Calpurnius Flamma*, the *Decii*, and hundreds more, voluntarily devoted themselves to destruction, to save their country. If you pretend to be a Christian, that is, to profess the most pure and most sublime principles in the world, do not infamously fall short of the perfection of un-enlightened Heathens.

If a temptation solicits, think whether you would yield to it, if you knew you should die next day.

Be assured, whatever you may think now, when you come to a death-bed, you will think you have given yourself up too much to pleasures, and other worldly pursuits, and be sorry that you had so large a share of them.

A good man has nothing to fear: A bad man every thing.

It is not easy to keep the mean between temporizing too much, and giving a proper testimony

ny for decency and virtue, when one sees them outraged.

Do not regard any person's opinion of you, against your own knowledge.

Observe, whether vice does not deform the most amiable persons.

Custom will have the same effect, with respect to death, as to other frightful things; it will take off its terror.

To understand a subject well, read a sett of the best authors upon it; make an abstract of it; and talk it over with the judicious.

There are no little sins.

It is in any man's power to be contented; of very few to be rich. The first will infallibly make you happy; which is more than you can depend on from the latter.

He who begins soon to be good, is like to be very good at last.

Take care not to go to the brink of vice, lest you fall down the precipice.

If you have, or have not, a chance for happiness in the next life, it cannot signify much how you pass the present. Would you pity a person, who was obliged to travel in bad weather, and put up with mean accommodations, as he was going to take possession of a fine estate? Or would you envy one, who had a pleasant day to go to execution?

If you have the esteem of the wise and good, do not trouble yourself about the rest. And if  
you



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you have not even that, let the approbation of a well-informed conscience make you easy in the mean while. Time will come, when you may command the other: I mean when you have had the public approbation of an infallible Judge before angels and men.

A good man gets good out of evil. A wicked man turns good to evil.

Fashion ought to have no weight in matters of any greater consequence than the cut of a coat, or a cap. Numbers do not alter right and wrong. If it should be the fashion of this world to act foolishly and wickedly, depend on it, the fashion of the next will be, for virtue to be rewarded and vice to be punished.

If you can find a place, where you may be hid from God, and your conscience, do there what you will.

Obedience is the great lesson to be taught children. It is what the All-wise Teacher would bring mankind to.

If you act only with a view to praise, you deserve none.

Listen to conscience, and it will tell you, whether you really do as you would be done by.

Virtue in theory only, is not virtue.

That bad habits are not quite unconquerable, is evident from *Demosthenes*, *Cicero*, and many others: But that they are very troublesome to deal with, and grow always stronger and stronger, universal experience proves too sufficiently.

Do

Don't deceive yourself: The true preparation for death, is not living at random to threescore; and then retiring from the world, and giving up a few of the last years of life to prayer and repentance: But cultivating in your mind, from the beginning, the substantial virtues, which are the true ornament of a worthy character, and which naturally fit for endless happiness.

He only is truly virtuous, who would be so, if he had no prospect of gaining more happiness by virtue than vice: though at the same time, it is reasonable, and commendable, to have a due respect to the recompence of reward, as things are at present constituted.

The lot of mankind upon an average is wonderfully equal. The distribution of happiness is not so irregular, as appears at first view. There cannot indeed be any great inequality in the distribution of what is so inconsiderable as the temporal happiness enjoyed by mankind. The contented, retired, and virtuous man has the best share.

Who could imagine it possible to forget death, which every object puts one in mind of, and every moment brings nearer?

What a strange condition a man must be in, whose judgment and practice are at variance. If a man does not perfectly agree with his wife, they can sometimes avoid one another's company, and so be easy. But can one run away from himself?

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Of all virtues, patience is oftneft wanted. How unhappy muft he be, who is wholly unfurnished with what is wanted every moment?

He, who endeavours to drown thought, and ftifle confcience, or who goes on in expenfive living, without looking into his affairs, is about as wife, as he who fhould fhut his eyes, and then run toward the precipice, as if his not feeing the danger would annihilate it.

That the ways of virtue are preferable to thofe of vice, is evident, in that we do not find people in old age, ficknefs, or on a death-bed, repenting, that they have lived too virtuously; but the contrary. This is a general confeffion from mankind, at a time when they certainly are fincere. And they would give the fame testimony to virtue at other times, if they could difengage themfelves from the prejudices and paffions, which blind them.

A good man, when he comes to die, has nothing to do, but to die.

Perhaps no created nature could be happy, without having experienced the contraft of unhappinefs.

As no character is more venerable than that of a wife old man, fo none is more contemptible than that of an old fool.

It makes wretched work, when the married pair come to difputing about privilege and fuperiority.

There

There is nothing more foolish than for those to fall out, who must live together, as husband and wife, and such near relations. But there is no falling out without folly on one side or other, or both.

The folly of some people in conversation, is beneath criticism. The only way of answering them, is to go out of hearing.

Consider with yourself, whether the wise and good would value you more or less, than they do now, if they knew your whole character.

It is well when old people know that they are old. Many, on the contrary, still affect to set themselves off as unimpaired in abilities both bodily and mental, long enough after they have outlived themselves.

It is necessary often to find fault. And the only way to do it, so as to be regarded, is to keep up your own dignity. A master, who blusters and swears at his servant, is despised; while he who reproves with mildness and gravity is likely to be revered and obeyed.

What embitters the common accidents of life to most people is, their entertaining a foolish notion, that calamities are unnatural, and that we have a right to the pleasures of life. Whereas the true state of the case is, that affliction is what we greatly need, and richly deserve, and that the pleasures of life are the mere gift of God, which therefore he may withhold, or bestow as he sees fit.

The use of reading is, to settle your judgment : not to confound it by a variety of opinions, nor to enslave it by authority.

If you will not listen to calm reason, take care lest you be made to feel the rod of severe affliction. If God loves you, he will drive you from your follies, if you will not be drawn from them.

If you are ever so sure that you ought to resent an injury, at least put off your resentment, till you cool. You will gain every end better by that means, and can lose nothing by going cautiously and deliberately to work ; whereas you may do yourself, or your neighbour, great mischief by proceeding rashly and hastily.

If you find, you cannot hold your own with the world, without making shipwreck of conscience and integrity ; retire in time, with a stock of honesty, rather than continue in business, to retire at last with a stock of wealth, which will not yield you happiness, when your integrity is gone.

The giver is the creditor ; the receiver the debtor. Had you not better be the former than the latter ?

Married people ought to consider, that the keeping up of mutual-love and peace, is of more consequence, than any point, which either the one or the other can want to gain, where life or fortune are not engaged. Let the husband consider, that it suits his superior wisdom to yield to the  
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the weaker in ordinary cases. Let the wife remember, she solemnly promised to obey.

The devil is feared and hated.

The consciousness of having acted from principle, and without the praise, or privy, of any person whatever, is a pleasure superior to all that applause can yield.

Why do you desire riches and grandeur? Because you think they will bring happiness with them. The very thing you want is now in your power. You have only to study contentment.

Don't be frightened, if misfortune stalks into your humble habitation. She sometimes takes the liberty of walking into the presence-chamber of kings.

Be open with prudence. Be artful with innocence: Wise as the serpent; harmless as the dove. If either of these two qualities must predominate, by all means let it be the latter.

It is a shameful wickedness, common in trade, to conceal the faults, or artfully heighten the good qualities, of what one wants to sell, or to disparage any article one has a mind to buy, in order to have it the cheaper. That trader, who cannot lay his hand upon his heart, and say, God, who knows all things, knows, I use my neighbour as I would wish to be used; is no other, in plain *English*, than a downright knave.

To love a woman merely for her beauty, is loving a corpse for the sake of its being covered

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with a fair skin. If the lovely body has a bad soul in it, it becomes then an object of aversion ; not of affection.

Never think yourself out of danger of a disorder of body by sickness, or of the mind by passion.

Those, who have not courage to resist fashion; would ill resist tortures.

Nothing can materially hurt you, but what hurts your virtue.

When we hear of one dead suddenly, we are surprized. Whereas the great wonder is, that a machine of such frail materials, and exquisite workmanship as the human body is, should hold in motion for an hour together.

Let a man consider what the general turn of his thoughts is. It is that which characterises the man. He who thinks of the most, and dwells longest, on worldly things, is an earthly man. He, whose mind is habitually employed in divine contemplation, is an heavenly man.

Absolute resignation to the divine disposal, teaches neither to desire to live, nor to die.

In proportion to the grief and shame, which a bad action would have caused you, such will be your joy, and triumph, on reflecting, that you have bravely resisted the temptation.

• Are not the great happiest, when most free of the incumbrances of greatness ? Is there then any happiness in greatness ?

Forgive

Forgive others, who have fallen, and be on your guard, lest you yourself fall. The angels in heaven, and the first of our species in innocence, have fallen.

The hand of time heals all diseases. Human nature cannot long continue in violent anger, grief, or distress of any kind. Spare yourself immoderate uneasiness. The time will come, when all these things, which now engage you so much, will be, as if they never had been; except your own character for virtue, or vice.

If you live such a life, that you may be able, upon rational grounds, to be patient at the last hour, when your near friends lose all patience, you will shew yourself a true hero.

Don't be uneasy, if you cannot master all science. You may easily know enough to be good and happy.

He who suffers lust to steal away his youth, ambition his manhood, and avarice his old age, may lament too late, the shortness of the useful part of his life.

If you have a family, it is no more allowable, that you squander away your substance, than for a steward to embezzle the estate, of which he is manager. You are appointed steward to your children; and if you neglect to provide for them, be it at your peril.

A truly great mind, from mere reverence for itself, would not descend to think a base thought, if it was never to be known to God, or man.



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This book is not likely to be read by any, whose station in life is not such, that thousands, and millions of mankind would think worthy of envy. It will then be very strange, if it should be read by any discontented person.

He that has no shame, has no grace.

Before you think of retiring from the world, be sure, that you are fit for retirement. In order to which it is necessary, that you have a mind so composed by prudence, reason, and religion, that it may bear being looked into; a turn to rural life; and a love for study.

He, who is free from any immediate distress, and cannot be happy now, it is in vain for him to think he ever shall, unless he changes the temper of his mind, which is what hinders his happiness at present.

Do not grieve for him who is departed out of a troublesome and dangerous state into a better. If a relation, or an acquaintance, is gone into the other world, wholly unprepared for it, his case is truly lamentable.

The advantage our passions have over us, is owing to ourselves. We may easily gain such a knowledge of our own weakness, as to feel them rising, before they be got to the height. And it is our own fault, if we do not restrain them in time.

The most violent shaking will not make the limpid water, in a glass, muddy. But a little disturbance will defile that in the well, or river.

If

If it were not for the impurity in the mind itself, the shock of temptation would have no effect.

Whoever knows his own weaknesses, and has the sense to endeavour to get rid of them, will find himself as fully employed, in his own mind, as a physician in an hospital.

It may not be in your power to excel many people in riches, honours, or abilities: But you may excel thousands in what is incomparably more valuable, I mean, substantial goodness of heart and life. Hither turn your ambition. Here is an object worthy of it.

Nothing is of any value to you, that you make a bad use of.

You cannot, you say, find time to examine yourself, whether you are prepared for death. It is no matter, you must find time to die.

It is no matter what you spend your life in, if you neglect the very business of life.

You may acquire great knowledge, and be the worse for it at last.

Don't think of giving a shilling, while you owe a pound.

Shall hypocrisy get footing among Christians? and shall a Heathen have the character of having rather desired *to be* virtuous than to be *thought* so?

I know no sight more nauseous than that of a fond husband and wife, who have not the sense to behave properly to one another before company: Nor any conversation more shocking, than  
that

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that of a snarling couple, who are continually girding at one another.

Consider, how uncommon it is to live to old age ; and take care to hold yourself in constant readiness for death.

The unthinking bulk of mankind are ever amusing themselves with some pursuit foreign to themselves. A wise man is ever looking inward.

It is no wonder if he, who reads, converses, and meditates, improves in knowledge. By the first, a man converses with the dead ; by the second, with the living ; and by the third, with himself. So that he appropriates to himself all the knowledge, which can be got from those who have lived, and from those now alive.

Let no man refuse a pardon to others, but he who does not need it for himself.

A very ignorant man may have a very learned library. A very learned man may be a very contemptible creature.

If it were safe to put off repentance and reformation to the very last day of life ; how do you know, that this is not it ?

Endeavour to do all the good in your power. Be as active, with prudence, as if you was sure of success. When you meet a disappointment, let it not abate your diligence, nor put you out of humour. And when you have done all, remember you have only done your duty.

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The *Dutch* will not suffer the smallest breach in their dykes, for fear of an inundation. Do not you suffer the smallest passage for vice into your heart, lest you find your virtue quite overflowed.

Do not be unhappy, if you have not married a professed beauty. They generally admire themselves so much, they have no love left for their husbands. Besides, it might not perhaps have been very agreeable to you, to see every fellow, as you went into public places, look at your wife, as if he could devour her with his eyes.

Take no counsel with flesh and blood ; if you aspire at what is truly great.

A foolish youth makes a crazy old age.

Take care of natural byasses, as self-love, pleasure, &c. Be sure, you will always incline enough toward the byass side. Therefore, you need have no guard upon yourself that way.

The angels are said in Scripture to desire to look into the Christian scheme, as if to learn somewhat. Do not you then think it beneath you to learn, while you are so much inferior to them. The most knowing are the most desirous of knowledge. The most virtuous the most desirous of improvement in virtue. On the contrary, the ignorant think themselves wise enough ; the vicious are in their own opinion good enough.

In bestirring yourself for the public advantage, remember, that, if you should not accomplish all that you propose, you will however have em-

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ployed yourself to good purpose, and will not fail of your reward, if you should of success.

Let no man complain of the shortness of life, but he who can say, he has never mispent one hour.

Make sure, first, and principally, of that knowledge, which is necessary for you, as a man, and a member of society. Next, of what is necessary in your particular way of life. Afterwards, improve yourself in all useful and ornamental knowledge, as far as your capacity, leisure, and fortune will allow.

If you would not have affliction visit you twice; listen, at once, to what it teaches.

Never cast your eye upon a good man, without resolving to imitate him. Whenever you see an instance of vice or folly in another, let it be a warning to you, to avoid them.

Where is yesterday now? With the years before the flood. But, if you have employed it well, it stands recorded above, to your eternal honour and advantage. If you have mispent, or neglected it; it will appear against you at the last day.

Would you have one general universal remedy for all diseases; study religion. The only rational ground of consolation in the various distresses of life is the consideration, that religion proposes a positive reward for bearing with dignity, and improving by affliction, and that afflictions are

in truth our greatest blessings, and proofs of the Divine favour.

If you unhappily fall into some fatal miscarriage, which wounds your conscience, and makes your life a burden; confess it, with all its circumstances, to some judicious and tender-hearted person, in whose fidelity you can confide, and whose advice may be of service to you. If it be of such a peculiar nature, that you do not think it prudent to confess yourself guilty of such a thing, send a full account of it, written in a disguised hand, desiring an answer in writing. When you have the opinion of a judicious person upon the heinousness of your crime; which you may find, you have either, through self-love, thought too slightly of, or, through an excessive tenderness of conscience, blamed yourself too much for; impress your mind properly with a sense of your fault; humble yourself deeply before God; and resolve bravely no more to be guilty of such folly. When you have done so, and find you can keep to your resolutions, it is not necessary that you continue to afflict yourself without end for what is irrecoverably past. The principal part of repentance is reformation.

I know no way of laying out a few shillings to more advantage, either for profit or pleasure, than upon an entertaining and instructing book. But this expence is greatly overdone by some, and ill laid out by others.

While

While you are unhappy, because your taylor has not cut your coat to your mind, many an honest man would be glad to have one that would only keep out the cold ; and cannot. While you are in a passion with your cook, because he has spoiled you one dish among six, many a poor family, who are your fellow-creatures, and fellow-Christians, are at a loss for bread, to supply the wants of nature. Think of this, and give over with shame, your foolish and impious complaints against that goodness of Providence, which has placed you in circumstances so much above persons of equal merit with yourself.

It is the unhappiness of human life, that in every man's conduct there has always been some miscarriage, or some misfortune in his circumstances, which has prevented his carrying his improvements in knowledge, and virtue, the length which might have been wished, or imagined. To make the most of life, such a number of concurrences are necessary, that it is no wonder they seldom all fall to the share of any one person. Health, long-life, fortune ; great and various natural abilities, and a good disposition ; an extensive education, begun early ; indefatigable diligence to carry on improvements ; a set of acquaintance capable of assisting in the pursuit of knowledge, and of encouraging in virtue ; and happening to live in an age favourable to freedom of enquiry. If we consider the improvements, some towering geniusses have made in knowledge,  
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and the lengths gone in exemplary virtue by many, who have laboured under innumerable disadvantages, we cannot help lamenting, that they were not favoured by Providence with the others, nor imagining what immense heights they must, in some circumstances, have reached. The most remarkable concurrence of all kinds of advantages, that ever was; and the most stupendous effects in consequence of it, will probably, as long as this world lasts, be the admiration, and delight, of all who are judges of the sublime labours of the greatest of philosophers, and best of men, the glory of our country, and of human nature. Yet even in him (though a sort of superior being, when compared with the rest of the species) it is possible to imagine some circumstances different, and to the advantage. To what heights then may our nature rise in future states, when every possible advantage shall concur!

Do not pretend to neglect or trifle with your duty, unless you have found out unquestionable and demonstrative proof, that the general sense of mankind in all ages and nations, that virtue is the perfection of human nature, and the sure way to happiness, and vice the contrary; is a gross absurdity and falsehood; that the Bible is a forgery; and that the belief of a judgment to come is a dream. If you be not as sure of all this, as that twice two are four, if there be the smallest possibility that it may be otherwise, it is the very desperation of madness to run the least hazard of the

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the destruction of your soul by living a wicked life.

Death-bed repentance, and death-bed charity are much of a kind. Men give up their vices and their money, when they can keep them no longer.

Can any person seriously think that he was formed capable of reason, virtue, and religion, only to eat, drink, divert himself, and die?

Accustom yourself to the strict observance of your duty in all respects, and it will in time be as troublesome to omit, or to violate it, as it is to many people to practise it.

Study to grow every day wiser and better. For every day brings you nearer to death.

It is strange to hear unthinking people descant upon the actions of men of universally acknowledged abilities, and to see them take it for granted, that they have acted a part entirely inconsistent with their known characters; which people very rarely do, and which it is therefore very unreasonable to suppose. If you were told of a miser's having done a generous thing, would you not be apt either to doubt the fact, or to conclude, that it must have appeared to him a likely way of getting somewhat? If you were told of a very passionate man's bearing an insult with exemplary patience; would you not be surprized? Why then should you rashly give into the belief, that a person, whose good understanding you are apprized of, has played the fool? or one, whose integrity

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integrity is known to you, has acted a treacherous part? Hear the accused before you condemn.

Value learning as much as you please. But remember, a judicious thinker is incomparably superior to a great reader.

What can be more monstrous than the common excuses for unfaithfulness to the married? People give their vows to one another in the most solemn manner; and then their first work is to think how to break them. They marry for better for worse; for richer or poorer, younger or older; handsomer or plainer. And then, when they come to repent of their rash choice, they pretend to excuse the breach of solemn vows by the pretext of defects they find in one another; of which it is wholly their own fault if they were not sufficiently apprized before their coming together.

To defeat calumny, 1. Despise it. To seem disturbed about it, is the way to make it be believed. And stabbing your defamer will not prove you innocent. 2. Live an exemplary life. And then your general good character will overpower it. 3. Speak tenderly of every body, even of your defamers, and you will make the whole world cry, Shame on them, who can find in their hearts to injure one so inoffensive.

You say, your misfortunes are hard to bear. Your vices are likewise hard to be forgiven. Is it terrible to think of your suffering pain, sickness, poverty, or the loss of dear friends or relations?

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It is more terrible to think of your having offended the infinitely great and good Creator, Preserver, and Judge of the world, your kind and bountiful Father and best Friend. Is pain a great evil? Vice is a greater. It is rebellion against the Supreme authority of the universe. Is the loss of a beloved wife like tearing limb from limb? So is falsehood, cruelty, or ingratitude like unhinging the universe, and bringing chaos back again. For they tend to universal disorder, and the destruction of the creation of God. Do you shudder at the thought of poverty or disease? Think with what eye infinite Purity must behold wickedness; with what abhorrence absolute Perfection must see the ruin produced in his works by irregularity and vice. Do you desire to escape misery? Fly from sin. Do you wish to avoid punishment? Above all things avoid wickedness, the cause of it.



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I N T R O D U C T I O N.

**T**HAT it is in itself agreeable to rectitude, necessary to the dignity of human nature, and the requisite concurrence of moral agents with the general scheme of the Governor of the universe, that we study above all things to perform our whole duty, viz. Taking proper care of our bodies and of our minds, loving our fellow-creatures as ourselves, and loving and serving our Creator ; that this is our indispensable duty, and that the habitual neglect, or violation of it, upon whatever pretence, will expose us to the Divine displeasure, as the conscientious observance

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of it is most likely to gain us his favour, and consequently final happiness; all this appears clear to human reason, separate from any consideration of the truth of revelation, and deducible from universally acknowledged principles. And if it may be supposed in the lowest degree probable, that the kind and merciful Parent of his creatures, who would have all men to be saved, and, in a consistency with eternal and immutable rectitude, to come to that happiness, of which their nature was formed capable, if it may be conceived in the lowest degree probable, that God should from the beginning have ordered things so, that one method, among others, for promoting universal goodness and happiness, should be, the appearance of an express message, or revelation from himself, with a set of clearer and more striking instructions, than had been any other way communicated to mankind; if this be conceivable without any direct absurdity, then is it likewise evident from the principles of natural religion, or reason, that it is the indispensable duty of all those of our species, to whom any such supposed Divine message, or revelation, may be offered, to bestow the utmost diligence in examining its pretensions, and, if found sufficient, to admit them with candor and sincerity of mind, and to receive the revelation itself with that veneration and submission, which it becomes dependent creatures to express to Him who sent it.

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That there is nothing directly absurd, or contradictory to reason, in the supposition of the possibility of a revelation given from God, for the reformation and improvement of mankind, is evident from its having been the opinion, and the hope, of the wisest and best of mankind, in all ages, and various nations. *Socrates, Plato, Confucius*, and others, the bright and burning lights of antiquity, have given their authority to the opinion of the probability of a revelation from God. They have declared, that they thought it an affair of great consequence to rekindle the light of reason, almost extinguished by vice and folly; to recall a bewildered race of beings into the way of virtue, to teach mankind, with certainty and authority, how they ought to behave toward their Creator, so as to obtain his favour, and the pardon of their offences. They, who were the best qualified, of all uninspired men of those antient times, for instructing mankind, were ready to own themselves insufficient for the task of reforming the world. And it is notorious, that their worthy labours were in no respect adequate to the universal, or general amendment of manners, even in the countries in which they lived, and taught. For that themselves greatly wanted instruction, appears plainly from what they have writ upon some of the most important points of morals, as the immortality of the soul; the nature, degree, and continuance of the rewards and punishments of

the future state, and the means of obtaining the pardon of sin. And that their lessons should have any considerable or powerful influence upon the people in general, was not to be expected; as they could at best but give them, as their opinions; reasonable indeed, and clear in the main, to any understanding, which should take the trouble to examine; but backed with no authoritative sanction, or Divine attestation, to command attention and obedience.

It is evident, that, as there can be, on one hand, no merit in believing what is true, even religious truth, without examination (for nothing is virtuous, or praise-worthy, that is irrational; and it is irrational to receive for truth what one has no solid reason to think is true) so on the other, to reject truth, especially religious truth, on any indirect or disingenuous account, or for any reason, besides some unsurmountable inconsistency in the doctrine, or deficiency in the evidence, is perverse and wicked. The faith, therefore, that is acceptable to God, who is alike the Author of both reason and revelation, is that rational reception of religious truth, which arises from candid and diligent examination, and a due submission to Divine authority. And the unbelief, which is condemned in Scripture, is that rejection of the revealed will of God, which is owing to prejudice, negligence, pride, or a fatal attachment to vice.

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The guilt of wilfully rejecting or opposing Divine truth must be more or less atrocious, according as the advantages for enquiry, and satisfaction upon the subject, are greater, or less. The inhabitants of the dark and barbarous parts of the world, and even of the countries, which are over-run by popish superstition, will therefore be found much more excusable for their deficiencies both in faith and practice, than we of this enlightened age, and nation, who enjoy every imaginable advantage for free enquiry, and labour under no kind of bias either toward credulity or the contrary, but what we choose to subject ourselves to.

Besides our being indispensably obliged in point of duty to take the utmost care, that a genuine revelation from God do not meet with neglect, much less disingenuous opposition, from us; it is also to be considered, what conduct wisdom prescribes in such a case. Were there no guilt in treating revelation with contempt, or opposition, yet no man of prudence would wilfully deprive himself of any probable advantage for information and improvement, from whatever quarter it might come. Nor will any wise man think lightly of a scheme intended, as Divine revelation is, for the important ends of republishing, with a set of authoritative sanctions, the religion of nature, and fixing beyond all dispute the duty of mankind, and the means for attaining their greatest happiness; and for communi-



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cating to them various important truths not known before, nor discoverable by human reason. That revelation has effectually done these things will appear by the general view of it, that will be exhibited in the second section.

A direct, explicit law, given by Divine authority, is the very thing which such a short-sighted, and imperfect order of beings as mankind, were peculiarly in want of. Nor is any method so fit for governing a set of creatures generally unqualified for reasoning out, with proper clearness and certainty, the means of attaining happiness, as a distinct system of rules of conduct guarded by proper sanctions. Is not all human government constituted on that foundation? When a new state or colony is to be settled, do the founders trust to the reason of a mixed multitude for the observance of equity, the security of property, and happiness of the whole? And was it not a more effectual way to lead mankind to the love of God, and one another, to give them an express law to that purpose, than to leave it to their own reasonings, to find out their duty to their Creator, and to one another, and whether they might trifle with it, or resolve faithfully to perform it? Therefore mankind have, probably, in no age been wholly left to their own reason: but a standing positive institution has all along been kept up in one part of the world, or other; and would in all probability have been more universally, as well as more conspicuously established;

ed ; but for the wickedness of mankind, which rendered them unworthy of partaking universally of this blessing, and occasioned its being imparted to them in a more obscure and limited manner.

We are at present in a state of discipline ; and every thing is intended as a part of our trial, and means of improvement. Revelation may be considered in the same light. A message from heaven is brought to our ears, attended with such evidences, as may be sufficient to convince the unprejudiced mind of its being genuine ; but at the same time not so ascertained, but that pretences for cavilling at, and opposing it, may, by disingenuous men, be found. If this gives an opportunity for the exercise of honest enquiry, and exhibits in the fairest light, the different characters of the sincere, but cautious, and inquisitive lover of truth ; of the indolent, unthinking, and credulous, who believes with the multitude ; and of the perverse and disingenuous, who rejects whatever is not suitable to his ways of thinking or living ; if revelation does these things, is it not to be reckoned one of the noblest trials of the present state ? And is it not promulgated in the very manner it ought to have been.

Standing oracles were probably some of the first methods which the Divine wisdom made use of to communicate particular express informations to mankind. There was an appointed place, to which

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which worshipers resorted, and consulting, received answers, and directions. Spiritual beings were employed in revealing the Divine will to mankind. And in visions and dreams, communications were given to men of characters eminent for virtue and piety. A race of prophets, or persons under divine influence, succeeding to one another, so as there should be no long period without one or more such inspired men, kept up an impression of the superintendency of God, and of the necessity of obedience to Him. But we know of no method so proper for communicating to mankind in general, a set of useful informations; so as to be of lasting, constant, and extensive advantage to them; as their being committed to writing, by which means they are easily accessible to all, to be consulted at all times and in all places.

The revelation, therefore, with which we are blest, has been, by the Divine providence directed to be penned by *Moses*, the prophets, and apostles; and has been wonderfully preserved for many ages, free, for any thing we know, or have reason to suspect, from material corruptions and alterations; and in it we have all informations necessary for our conduct here, and happiness hereafter.

Whoever chooses to enlarge the sphere of his enquiry as wide as possible, may examine the several schemes of religion, which have pretended to a Divine original, and by comparing them together

together, he will soon find which bears the characters of being truly from heaven.

As to us, who live in these happy realms of knowledge and freedom of enquiry, the religion contained in the Scripture of the Old and New Testaments offers itself more immediately, and challenges our chief and most attentive examination ; it is therefore evident, that it lies immediately upon us, to enquire into its pretensions ; and that we may more safely neglect all the others ; none of which the Divine providence has given us so fair an opportunity of examining, or made so clearly our duty to enquire into. But to enquire into religion in an impartial manner, a man must begin with shaking off all prejudice, from education and general opinion, and must suppose himself a mere unprincipled *Indian*, not byassed to any species of religion in the world. He must likewise resolve to go through the whole of what he is to examine ; not contenting himself with a partial and imperfect view of things, which is the way to acquire imperfect and mistaken notions. He must also go directly to the fountain, if he would know the true virtues of the water of life ; that is, he must, to know the religion of the Scriptures, go directly to the Scriptures, and study them more than all the systems or bodies of divinity in the world.

There is no greater hindrance to the candid examination and ready reception of so pure and strict a scheme of religion as the Christian, than  
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a fatal attachment to vice. This was the original obstacle, which retarded its establishment in the world, at its first appearance ; has prevented its progress ever since ; has disguised and deformed its native beauty ; has almost wholly defeated its genuine intention, in one church ; and raised enemies against it, even in this land of light, in an age immediately succeeding to the times, in which it stood the examination of the ablest enquirers, and came out established upon a more rational foundation, than ever it stood upon, from the apostolic age downwards. It will therefore be necessary, above all things, for the enquirer into the truth of Christianity, to purge his mind from every corrupt affection, that may prompt him to wish to find it suspicious or false ; to take no counsel with flesh and blood ; but to labour to work himself up to that pitch of heavenly-mindedness, which it requires ; that so he may not only be wholly unprejudiced against it, but may be disposed to listen to reason in its favour, and may find within himself a witness to its truth.

### S E C T. I.

*Previous Objections against a Revelation in general, and that of Scripture in particular, considered.*

**A** Revelation had not been given to mankind, had there been no need of it, in such a sense as that it must prove wholly useless. But

the question is, whether it is not an absurdity to talk of a genuine revelation's being needless, or useless. Can any thing be said to be needless, or useless, that is calculated to improve mankind? If a sett of moral instructions from one person will be of any service to me, can it be said, that more of the same kind will be useless? If I had already digested all the knowledge, that is to be got in books, and by conversation with the wise and learned of my own species, would the conversation of a superior being be needless and useless to me? Nay, if the archangel Gabriel had it in his power to receive some new informations by revelation from God, would he neglect them, as needless and useless, because his knowledge is already immensely extensive? These objectors to revelation, who talk of its being unnecessary, do not seem to have clear ideas to their words. For if they had, they never would think of limiting the Divine goodness to his creatures, or of alleging, that their advantages for happiness were too great. Nor would one think that revelation should ever have been looked on as superfluous, by any person who knew the world; but on the contrary, that all such would readily acknowledge, that if it were possible to have yet another additional revelation, or advantage for virtue, mankind would not then be at all too good. Nor can any one help seeing the real eventual advantage of revelation, who knows any thing of the difference between the condition, as to knowledge

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knowledge and virtue, of those ages and nations, which have, and those which have not enjoyed the light of it. And here it is to be remembered, that in all probability it is a very small part of our knowledge that is the genuine acquisition of mere human reason, wholly unassisted. The very use of letters seems to have pretensions to a greater author than *Cadmus*, or than *Moses*. And probably the whole of the religious knowledge we possess, is originally owing to revelation.

The deplorable darkness and ignorance, in which those of our species are found involved, who have lived detached from the rest of mankind, and have never enjoyed, or have wholly lost, all traces of revealed knowledge (if that be really the case of any people, which is to be doubted) is a proof of the advantage of revelation. And it is only from what we find to be the case of those newly discovered nations, who have undoubtedly few supernatural advantages, that we can fairly judge, what the state of mankind in general would have been, if the species had been left wholly to themselves. For, as to this side of the globe, it is to be questioned, if there ever was any people upon it, who could be said to be in a perfect state of nature, as will afterwards appear.

The despisers of revealed religion, on account of the all-sufficiency of human reason, are desired to consider the following proofs of its

boasted sufficiency in matters of both belief and practice.

The only account we have of the antediluvian manners, is that given by *Moses*, viz. That all flesh corrupted their ways to such a degree, as to render it necessary to purify the earth by a general deluge. Of the patriarchal times the only accounts we have are likewise from the same venerable writer; which shew the people of those ages, except a few families, to have been wholly given to polytheism and idolatry. The destruction of the five cities by fire from heaven, for the most abominable and unnatural crimes, shews the state of corruption to which the people of those times were sunk. The accounts we have from *Herodotus* and *Diodorus Siculus*, of the religion of the *Egyptians*, the fathers of wisdom and learning, are the disgrace of human reason. Their worshipping the most contemptible and hateful animals, as crocodiles, storks, cats, monkeys, and calves; to kill which sacred animals, was death by their law, and which they carefully embalmed, and solemnly deposited in tombs; and their adoration even of plants, as leeks and onions; these are strange instances of the sufficiency of reason for judging in religious matters. They also (according to the same author) allowed of theft; and made marriages between brothers and sisters a part of religion. What were all the popular religions of the *Pagans* in general, but a heap of absurdities? What can be said of their deities;



deities ; whose characters were too shocking, for men and women of such manners to be suffered to live among us ? And lest there should be any want of such hopeful objects of worship, they multiplied them to such a number, that *Varro* reckons up a little army of them, and *Lucian* represents the heavens as in danger of being broke down with the weight of such a multitude. The horrid practice of appeasing them with human blood, and even with that of the children of the zealous votaries themselves, with the abominable impurities ascribed to them, and practised by their blind worshipers in honour of them, shew what notions of the object, and nature of worship, human reason, left to itself, is apt to run into. Those, who had better notions of the superior powers, represent them as either quarrelling and fighting (*Homer* makes his goddesses treat one another with the language of *Billingsgate*) or as a set of idle luxurious voluptuaries, spending their whole time in quaffing of nectar, wholly regardless of human affairs. In some antient nations, every young woman was obliged to prostitute herself in the temple of *Venus*, as a religious ceremony. *Thucydides* says, that both *Greeks* and *Barbarians* thought robbery and plunder glorious. The whole antient heroism was indeed little else. And it was chiefly by violence and brutal fury, that the *Macedonian*, *Roman*, and other states acquired such an extent of dominion. From *Homer*, and other writers, down to the *Roman* historians,

we see how the manners of antient times allowed to treat captives in war. Princes and princesses were dragged in triumph after the chariot of the conqueror; and they, and the inferior people, by thousands, butchered in cold blood, or condemned to slavery. The beautiful part of the female captives shared among the heroes, and condemned to prostitution, and infamy. The laws of *Lycurgus* were founded in war and savage heroism, and allowed stealing, unless the person was caught in the fact. Adultery was also in certain cases established by law. Exposing of children was, among the *Romans*, according to *Lactantius*, a daily practice. Gladiators butchering one another by thousands, was the reigning diversion among those lords of the world for ages. And it was common, when one had got the other down, for the conqueror to look at the people for their orders, whether to spare, or kill him, which they often gave for the latter; and even the ladies, if we may believe their own writers, would often give the signal to dispatch a poor, conquered, helpless victim, that they might feast their savage and unwomanly hearts with scenes of cruelty and blood. The authors of the *Grecian* wisdom were almost all addicted to one vice or other, some more, some less scandalous. Their snarling, and impudence, got them the appellation of *Cynics*; and disputes about words run through all their writings. Too many of both *Greek* and *Roman* philosophers, or wise men, flattered the vices of

princes. *Socrates* himself, the father of wisdom, and opposer of polytheism, encouraged to consult the oracles, and to offer sacrifice to idols. *Plato's* morals were so obscure, that it required a lifetime to understand them. *Cicero* excuses and countenances lewdness in some parts of his writings. And those of *Seneca* are not without their poison. What were the manners of the polite court of *Augustus* (to say nothing of the sea of blood, through which he swam to the imperial throne) is pretty evident from the abominable and unnatural filthiness scattered through the writings of the wits of that elegant age. Which of the antient sages did not too far temporize, and conform to the national superstition, contrary to their better knowledge, and even make that worst species of dissimulation a part of the duty of a good citizen; the consequence of which was the effectual rivetting of error, and prevention of reasonable enquiry, and reformation. It is certain, that whole nations have placed virtue on directly opposite sides; and that the wise antients differed in their notions of what the chief good of man consisted in, to such a degree, that one author reckons up several hundred different opinions on the subject. This shews that the understanding, or moral sense, though sufficient, when illuminated by Divine revelation, to judge of truth, is not, for all that, capable of striking out of itself sufficient light, safely to guide itself, especially overwhelmed and oppressed

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sed as it is by vice and prejudice. The most sublime of the Heathen philosophers never put the immortality of the soul (the foundation of all religion) out of doubt. On the contrary, they represent it as at best only a very desirable scheme. Of a general resurrection of the body, an universal public judgment, and final happiness of the whole human nature, soul and body, in a state of everlasting glory, it does not appear that they had any clear notions; or that they carried their views beyond the *Elysian* state. None of them could satisfy a thinking mind about the proper means for propitiating the Deity, or whether guilt was likely to be pardoned at all; nor could any of them prescribe an acceptable method of addressing the Object of worship. On the contrary, *Plato* represents the wise *Socrates* as at a full stop, and advising not to worship at all, till such time as it should please God to inform mankind, by an express revelation, how they might address him acceptably. Nor did any of them sufficiently inculcate humility, the foundation of all virtues. On the contrary, the very schemes of some of the sects were rather founded in pride and obstinacy. Nor did any of them go so far as to shew that forgiving injuries, loving enemies, and setting the affections upon the future heavenly state, were absolutely necessary. The utmost that any of them did, was to recommend the more sublime virtues to the practice of

such persons as could reach them. So much for the Heathen doctrines and morals.

*Mabomet* is known to have abandoned himself to lust all his life long. His impostures were so gross, that when he first broached them, his best friends were ashamed of both him and them. His religion sets up on the foot of direct violence and force of arms, and makes sensual gratifications, to the most excessive degree of beastliness, the final reward of a strict attachment to it. The *Koran*, so far as it is an original, is a heap of absurd doctrines, and trifling or bad laws. The few miracles which *Mabomet* pretends to have performed, are either things within the reach of human power, or are hideous and incredible absurdities, or are wholly unattested.

The papists, who pretend to be Christians; but have in fact forged a religion of their own; have they done any honour to the opinion of the all-sufficiency of reason in matters of religion? Let every one of their peculiar doctrines be examined, and let it be considered what advantage it is of to mankind for regulating their belief, and practice. Their invocation of saints, who ought to be omnipresent, to hear their prayers; which, according to their own account of the matter, they are not. Their purgatory, out of which the priest can pray a soul at any time for money, which must defeat the very design of a purgatory. Their penances, pilgrimages, fines, absolutions, and indulgences; whose direct tendency

dency is to lead the deluded votaries of that cursed superstition into a total neglect of the obligations of virtue, defeating the very end of religion. The infallibility of their popes, while one thunders out bulls and decrees directly contrary to those of another. And, last and worst (for it is endless to enumerate the absurdities of popery) that most hideous and monstrous of all productions of the human brain, transubstantiation, which at once confounds all sense, overturns all reasoning, and renders all truth precarious and uncertain. These are the triumphs of reason; these the productions of human invention, when applied to making of religions.

Upon the whole, from this brief and imperfect representation of the state of those parts of the world which have enjoyed but a very little of the light of genuine Divine revelation, (for it is to be doubted, whether any was ever wholly without it) and of those which have wickedly extinguished, or foolishly forsaken it, from this very brief representation, I say, human reason, unassisted from above, shews itself so far from sufficient for leading mankind in general into a completely right belief and practice, that in almost every point, beyond mere simple right and wrong, it misleads into error, or falls short of truth. As the naked eye, though very fit for directing our way on earth, yet misrepresents, through its weakness, every celestial object; shews the sun no bigger than a chariot-wheel,

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the moon flat like a plate of silver, and the planets like lucid points. The same eye strengthened by a telescope sees the sun, and moon, and planets, large, and globular, as they really are. Revelation is that to reason, which a telescope is to the eye; an advantage and improvement. As he, who would see the wonders of the heavens, arms his eye with a telescope, so does the judicious enquirer into religious truth, apply to revelation for those informations, which reason alone would never have given, tho' it judges of, and approves them, when given. And as the astronomer does not think of putting out his eye, in order to see better with a telescope, so neither does the judicious advocate for revelation desire to oppose it to reason, but to examine it by reason, and to improve his reason by it.

The abominable priest-craft, and horrid persecution and bloodshed, which have been the disgrace of a religion, whose distinguishing characteristic is benevolence, is no confutation of what I have been advancing in support of the natural tendency and actual good effects upon a great number of mankind, of pure religion; and only shews that even a Divine appointment may be perverted to the purpose of establishing the kingdom of Satan. At any rate, the abuse of revelation is no better objection against revelation, than that of reason (of which every hour presents us various instances) is against reason; which no  
body

body ever thought of urging, as an argument that it was not of Divine original.

The disputes among the many different sects of Christians, which have rendered it very difficult for those, who search for the doctrines of revealed religion, any where, but in the Bible itself, to settle their judgment upon many points; those disputes are no just objection against revelation, any more than against every branch of human science whatever; upon every one of which, not excepting even the pure mathematics, controversies have been raised. A revelation, upon which it should be impossible for designing, subtle men to raise disputes, is hardly conceivable; or, however, is altogether inconsistent with the idea of a contrivance intended for the improvement of a set of free, moral agents; who must be expected to treat revelation, as well as every other kind of information, according to their respective capacities, and tempers of mind.

If it has been alledged, that for God to have recourse to a direct message, or revelation, for reforming or improving mankind, or supplying the deficiencies of reason, looks like a defect in the make of the creature; and that reason ought alone to have been made originally equal to the purpose of enabling mankind to secure their final happiness; the answer is easy, to wit, That if human reason were supposed more equal to the purpose for which it was given, than it is, a re-



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velation might still be of great advantage. And that to suppose an express contrivance for mending the moral world necessary, or useful, is no more unphilosophical, or, to speak properly, more unworthy of God, than one for the same purpose, in the natural world. And this latter is by our great philosopher allowed to be probable.

Supposing it reasonable to believe that the Divine power, either immediately, or by means of the intervention and instrumentality of inferior agents and causes, does continually actuate the natural world, and conduct the moral; is not this a continued interposition? Why then should the thought of an extraordinary interposition on an extraordinary occasion, in order to a great and important end, be so difficult to conceive? At any rate, what must those gentlemen, who are so startled at the notion of an extraordinary step taken by the infinitely wise and absolutely free Governor of the world; what must they say of the creation of the universe? Did the universe come into existence by settled laws of nature? Is there any law of nature by which nothing becomes something? And does that law take place at such and such precise times, and no other? Let the opposers of extraordinary interpositions make the most of that difficulty, they must acknowledge somewhat extraordinary, as they choose to call it, to take place now and then in the universe on occasion of the  
creation

creation of a world. And it does not appear to me, that the restoration, or (as it may be called) making a-new a world, is of much less consequence, or less worthy of a particular interposition, than the first creation of it.

But after all, what is it those gentlemen puzzle themselves with? Are they sure, that in order, the giving a positive revelation to mankind, and the restoration of a world by means of such an institution as the Christian, there is any thing to be done out of, or contrary to, the common course of things? Can they be positive, that there never was, or will be, any scheme, analogous to this, contrived for any other order of beings in the universe? To affirm this, would be about as judicious as the opinion of the vulgar, that thunder is an immediate expression of the Divine displeasure, and that comets are sent on purpose to give notice of impending judgments. Whereas a little knowledge of nature shews, that, whatever moral instructions those phænomena are in general fitted to communicate at all times to mankind, the cause of them is part of the mere constitution of nature. And who can say, that superior beings may not have such extensive views of the august plan of the Divine government, as to see the whole scheme of revealed religion in the same light?

Nor are there wanting various particulars, in the Divine government of the moral world, analogous, in a lower sphere, to the grand scheme  
of

of revelation. How much are we in the present state dependent on others for various advantages spiritual and temporal? What gift of God do we receive without the interposition of some agent? How are parents, teachers, spiritual pastors, and guardian-angels, made the channels of the Divine goodness to us? Is there not in this something similar to our receiving the inestimable advantages of the perfect knowledge of our duty, the pardon of our sins, and all the blessings which religion bestows, through the channel of a Mediator between God and us? Our Saviour's taking upon himself certain sufferings, by which we are to gain great advantages, is by no means foreign to the common course of the world, in which we see very great hazards run, and actual inconveniences suffered, by friends and relations for one another. He and his apostles allow of this analogy.

In the common course of things, thoughtlessness and folly, which though not innocent, are yet pitiable, are the causes of very terrible misfortunes; and are therefore in many cases provided for by the goodness of the wise Governor of the world, so that they do not always prove irretrievable. A thoughtless person, by intemperance, runs himself into a quarrel, in which he is wounded. Without help, he must perish. And it is not to be expected, that he should be miraculously recovered. Is it not the Divine goodness, which has furnished the materials necessary for his cure, made provision in the formation

mation of the human body for the accidents it might be liable to, so that every hurt should not prove fatal to it; and engaged us to be kind and helpful to one another; so that we should be sure of comfort from one or other in our distress? In the same manner, and by the same goodness, exerted in a higher degree, revelation teaches us, a remedy is provided for the recovery to the Divine mercy (in a consistency with the wisdom and rectitude of his moral government) of a fallen, offending order of beings. In the case of the unfortunate person here exemplified, his being convinced of his folly; his being heartily concerned for it; and his resolving never more to be guilty of the like, is not sufficient for his recovery; any more than repentance and reformation alone could be supposed sufficient to put offenders on a footing with innocent beings.

Natural ends are produced by natural means; so are moral. Natural means are many of them slow, and seemingly unpromising, if experience did not shew their fitness. It may therefore be concluded, and hoped, that the design of giving a revelation to mankind, however unpromising of extensive success, will eventually, and upon the whole, be gained, in such a measure as it may not be wholly defeated. Natural means come short, in some particular instances, of their direct and apparent ends; as in abortions of all kinds in the animal and vegetable world. In the same manner it is to be feared, that all the moral means

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means used by Divine goodness, for the reformation of mankind, and revelation among the rest, will, through their perverseness, come greatly short of the direct end, the happiness of the species; though it shall not be in the power of all created beings to prevent the secondary and more indirect intention of the Divine moral institutions.

Some opposers of revelation have run themselves into a great many difficulties by forming to themselves a set of groundless and arbitrary notions of what a revelation from God ought absolutely to be, which not taking place according to their theory, they have concluded against the credibility of revelation; than which nothing can be imagined more rash and unreasonable, to say the least. They have, for example, laid it down for an infallible position, that a truly divine revelation must contain all possible kinds and degrees of knowledge. But finding that the modern astronomy, and other sciences, have no place in Scripture, or that the expressions in those antient books do not always suit the true philosophy, they conclude that Scripture is not given by inspiration. But when it is considered, that the design of revelation was not to make men philosophers, it may very well be supposed, that the spirit, which conducted it, did not see it necessary to inspire the sacred penmen with any knowledge not directly necessary for improving mens hearts and lives. Finding some inconsiderable

able variations in the historical accounts, as of our Saviour's resurrection, and other particulars, they conclude, that the narration is not authentic; for that inspiration must have prevented any such variation in the accounts of the different writers. But it is to be remembered, that the measure of inspiration must be supposed to have been limited; that every single article and syllable was not necessary to be expressly inspired; that where the human faculties of the writers were in the main sufficient, it was not to be supposed inspiration should interpose; and that revelation was designed to be perfect (as all things with which we have to do at present) only to a certain degree.

The want of universality is an objection of the same kind. But if the consideration of the true religion's not being communicated alike to all mankind, proves any thing against it, the same objection lies against reason. For it is given to men in such different measures, as almost to render it doubtful whether they ought not to be pronounced of different species. Nor is there any injustice in the different distribution of gifts and advantages; if we take in the due allowance made for those differences in the final judgment. If a *Hottentot* be hereafter judged as a *Hottentot*, he ought as much to own the justice of his sentence as a *Newton*, when judged as a philosopher.

Could

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Could we have formed any just notion what the measure of human reason, what the reach of human sagacity, ought to have been? Whether it ought to shine forth in its greatest brightness at first, or to come to its maturity by slow degrees; whether it ought in its exertion to be wholly independent on the body, or if it should be liable to be disordered with the disorder of the corporeal frame; whether it ought to be always equal, or weak in youth and in extreme old age. Who would have thought the seemingly precarious faculty of invention a proper method for improving arts and sciences! Who would have thought that writing and printing could ever have been made the means of carrying human knowledge to the height we know they have done? If we find that Divine wisdom can, by the most unpromising causes, produce the greatest effects, and that hardly any thing is constituted in such a manner as human wisdom would beforehand have judged proper, why should we wonder if we cannot reconcile the scheme of Divine revelation to our arbitrary and fantastical views, which, for any thing we know, may be immensely different from those of the Author of revelation?

With all our incapacity of judging beforehand what revelation ought to have been, it does not follow, that we may not be sufficiently qualified to judge of its evidence, and excellence, now it is delivered. And that is enough to determine

us to what is right, and safe for us, I mean, to pay it all due regard. For in all cases, it is our wisdom to act upon the best probability we can obtain.

A supernatural scheme contrived by Divine wisdom, an express revelation from God, may well be expected to contain difficulties too great for human reason to investigate. The ordinary oeconomy of nature, and providence, is founded in, and conducted by, a sagacity too deep for our penetration, much more the extraordinary parts, if such there are, of the Divine government. In the works of nature, it is easy for men to puzzle themselves and others with difficulties unsurmountable; as well as to find objections innumerable; to say, Why was such a creature or thing made so? Why was such another not made in such a particular manner? The ways of providence are also too intricate, and complex, for our shallow understandings to trace out. The wisdom, which guides the moral, as well as that which framed the natural system, is Divine; and therefore too exquisite for our gross apprehensions. Even in human government, it is not to be expected, that every particular, in every law or regulation, should give satisfaction to every subject, or should be perfectly seen through by individuals at a distance from the seat of government. Which is often the cause, especially in free countries, of most unreasonable and ridiculous complaints against what



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what is highly wise and conducive to the general advantage. But in enquiring into nature, providence, and revelation, one rule will effectually lead us to a proper determination, to wit, To judge by what we know; not by what we are ignorant of. If in the works and ways of God, in nature, providence, and revelation, where comprehended by us, we find a profusion of wisdom and goodness exhibited in the most perspicuous and striking manner; is any thing more reasonable, than to conclude, that if we saw through the whole, we should perceive the same propriety in those parts which are intricate, as we now do in the clearest. And it has been the peculiar fate of revelation, much more than either of the other two, to be opposed on account of such difficulties in it, as arise from our weakness. Especially, it has very rarely happened, that the existence of God, and the doctrine of his being the Creator of the world, has been questioned merely on account of any difficulties in tracing out the wisdom of any part of the constitution of nature. And yet, it would be as rational to argue, that there is no God, because the brutes have in some inferior respects the advantage of the lord of this lower world; as to question the truth of revealed religion, after examining its innumerable evidences, presumptive, and positive, merely because we may think it strange, that the Saviour of the world should die the death of a criminal.

Here

Here it is proper to enter an express caveat against whatever may pretend to the sacred character of a point of faith or religion, and on that pretence elude, or baffle reason. There can nothing be imagined to be intended for the use and improvement of reasonable minds, which directly, and explicitly contradicts reason. If reason and revelation be both the gifts of God, it is not to be expected, that they should oppose one another; but that they should tally, as both coming from the same wise and good Author. Whatever therefore is an express absurdity, or contradiction, we may be well assured, can be no genuine doctrine of revealed religion, but a blundering invention of weak, or designing men. It is one thing for a point of revealed religion to be, as to its *modus*, above our reach, and quite another matter, for a doctrine to be clearly contradictory to human understanding. That the direct connection in the nature of things betwixt the death of Christ and the salvation of mankind, should be utterly inexplicable by human reason, is no more than what might have been expected, and, if unquestionably a doctrine of revealed religion, is to be received without hesitation, upon the credit of the other parts which we understand more perfectly. But, that on a priest's muttering a few words over a wafer, it should immediately become a whole Christ, while at the same time it is certain, that if a little arsenic had been put into the composition of it, it

would have effectually poisoned the soundest believer; and while we know that there can be but one whole Christ, though the papists pretend to make a thousand Christs in a day; this is not to be considered as a difficult or mysterious point, but as a clear, express contradiction both to sense and reason.

It is also proper here to mention, that whatever doctrine of religion (supposing it to be really genuine) is beyond the reach of human understanding, cannot be imagined necessary to be received, any farther than understood. For belief cannot be carried the least degree beyond conception. And it is to be remembered, that a doctrine may be contained in Scripture, and yet not a necessary point of faith. For example, it is said in Scripture, that the angels desire to look into the scheme of the redemption of mankind. But nobody has ever thought of making an article of faith, necessary to salvation, That we are to believe, that the angels are interested in the scheme of our redemption. Unless Scripture itself expressly declares a doctrine necessary to be received, we cannot, without rashness, pretend to pronounce it absolutely necessary to be believed in any precise or determinate sense whatever.

It has been objected against the scheme of revelation which is received among us, That great part of the precepts contained in it, are such, as appear at first view agreeable to sound reason; whereas it might have been expected (say those objectors, or rather cavillers) that  
every

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every article in it should be quite new and unheard-of. At the same time, the same gentlemen think proper likewise to object, That many of the Scripture-expressions are very different from those used by other antient authors. So that it is, it seems, an objection against Scripture, That *it is* what it might have been expected to be; and that *it is not* what it might have been expected to be.

To the former of these cavils it may be briefly answered, That the general agreement between reason and revelation, shews both to be of Divine original; while revelation's being an improvement and addition to reason\*, shews its usefulness and expediency. The latter difficulty will vanish on considering that many of the Scripture expressions are visibly accommodated to human apprehension, while others on the same subjects are raised to a sublimity suitable to the nature of the thing; by which means the narrowest mind receives an information suitable to its reach, while the most elevated conception is enlarged by views of the noblest and most sublime nature. Thus, to mention only one instance at present, the meanest reader of Scripture is struck with fear of One, whose eye is quick and piercing, to search the hearts, and try the reins, of the children of men, and whose hand is powerful, and his out-stretched arm mighty, to seize and punish offenders. At the same time the profound phi-

\* See Page 307.

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lofopher is in the fame writings informed, that God is a fpirit filling heaven and earth, and not contained within the limits of the heaven of heavens, but inhabiting immenſity and eternity, in whom all live and move, and have their being; neceſſarily invifible, and altogether unlike to any of his creatures; having neither eyes, nor hands, nor paſſions like thoſe of men; but whoſe ways are infinitely above our ways, and his thoughts above our thoughts. Thus the Scripture language is ſuch, as that of a revelation, intended for the improvement of men of all different degrees of capacity, ought to be. It is, in ſhort, fit for the uſe of a whole ſpecies.

That the Old Teſtament particularly, which is the only book extant in that language, ſhould be ſo well preſerved, and underſtood as it is, ſo long after the *Hebrew* has ceaſed to be a living language; that we ſhould at this time be able to make out a regular hiſtory, and a ſett of conſiſtent thoughts and views, from writings of ſuch antiquity; is much more to be wondered, than that there ſhould be found in them difficulties, ſeeming contradictions, and thoughts or expreſſions different from thoſe found in productions of a later date. But above all things, that the thoughts and expreſſions in Scripture ſhould ſo far exceed in ſublimity all other compositions, ſeems unaccountable upon every other ſcheme, but their being of Divine original. Of the truth of  
this

this assertion, let the following instance, among innumerable others, serve as a proof.

The loftiest passage, in the most sublime of all human productions, is the beginning of the eighth book of *Homer's Iliad*. There the greatest of all human imaginations labours to describe, not a hero, but a god; not an inferior, but the supreme god; nor to shew his superiority to mortals, but to the heavenly powers; and not to one, but to them all united. The following is a verbal translation of it.

“ The saffron-coloured morning was spread  
“ over the whole earth; and *Jupiter*, rejoicing  
“ in his thunder, held an assembly of the gods  
“ upon the highest top of the many-headed  
“ *Olympus*. He himself made a speech to them;  
“ and all the gods together listened.

“ Hear me, all ye gods, and all ye goddesses,  
“ that I may say what my soul in my breast  
“ commands. Let not therefore any female  
“ deity, or any male, endeavour to break thro’  
“ my word; but all consent together, that I  
“ may most quickly perform these works.  
“ Whomsoever, therefore, of the gods I shall  
“ understand to have gone by himself, and of  
“ his own accord, to give assistance either to the  
“ *Trojans* or the *Greeks*, he shall return to  
“ *Olympus* shamefully wounded; or I will throw  
“ him, seized by me, into dark hell, very far  
“ off, where the most deep abyss is under the  
“ earth; where there are iron gates, and a  
“ brazen

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“brazen threshold, as far within hell, as heaven is distant from the earth. He will then know, by how much I am the most powerful of all the gods.

“But come, try, O ye gods, that ye may all see. Hang down the golden chain from heaven, hang upon it, all ye gods, and all ye goddesses; but ye shall not be able to draw from heaven to the ground *Jupiter* the great counsellor, though ye strive ever so much. But when I afterwards shall be willing to draw, I shall lift both the earth itself, and the sea itself. Then I shall bind the chain round the top of *Olympus*, and they shall all hang aloft. For so much am I above gods and above men.”

With this most masterly passage of the greatest master of the sublime, of all antiquity, the writer, who probably had the greatest natural and acquired advantages of any mortal for perfecting a genius; let the following verbal translation of a passage from writings penned by one brought up a shepherd, and in a country where learning was not thought of, be compared; that the difference may appear. In this comparison, I know of no unfair advantage given the inspired writer. For both fragments are literally translated; and, if the critics are right, the *Hebrew* original is verse, as well as the *Greek*.

“O Lord, my God, thou art very great!  
 “Thou art clothed with honour and majesty!  
 “Who

“ Who coverest thyself with light, as with a  
 “ garment: who stretchest out the heavens like  
 “ a canopy. Who layeth the beams of his  
 “ chambers in the waters: who maketh the  
 “ clouds his chariot: who walketh upon the  
 “ wings of the wind. Who maketh his angels  
 “ spirits; his ministers a flame of fire. Who  
 “ laid the foundation of the earth, that it should  
 “ not be moved for ever. Thou coveredst it,  
 “ with the deep, as with a garment: the waters  
 “ stood above the mountains. At thy rebuke  
 “ they fled; at the voice of thy thunder they  
 “ hasted away. They go up by the mountains;  
 “ they go down by the vallies unto the place  
 “ thou hast founded for them. Thou hast set a  
 “ bound, that they may not pass over; that  
 “ they turn not again to cover the earth.

“ O Lord, how manifold are thy works! In  
 “ wisdom hast thou made them all. The earth  
 “ is full of thy riches. So is the great and wide  
 “ sea, wherein are creatures innumerable, both  
 “ small and great. There go the ships. There  
 “ is that leviathan, which thou hast made to  
 “ play therein. These all wait upon thee, that  
 “ thou mayst give them their food in due sea-  
 “ son. That thou givest them they gather.  
 “ Thou openest thy hand: they are filled with  
 “ good. Thou hidest thy face: they are  
 “ troubled. They die, and return to their dust.  
 “ Thou sendest forth thy spirit: they are  
 “ created; and thou renewest the face of the  
 “ earth.



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“ earth. The glory of the Lord shall endure  
 “ for ever. The Lord shall rejoice in his works.  
 “ He looketh on the earth, and it trembleth.  
 “ He toucheth the hills; and they smoke. I  
 “ will sing unto the Lord as long as I live. I  
 “ will sing praise unto my God, while I have  
 “ my being.”

I appeal to every reader, whether the former of these two fragments is not, when compared with the latter, a school-boy's theme, a capucinate, or a Grubstreet ballad, rather than a production fit to be named with any part of the inspired writings. Nor is it only in one instance, that the superiority of the Scripture style to all human compositions appears. But taking the whole body of sacred poesy, and the whole of profane, and considering the character of the *Jehovah* of the former, and the *Jupiter* of the latter, every one must see the difference to be out of all reach of comparison. And, what is wonderfully remarkable, Scripture poesy, though penned by a number of different hands, as *Moses*, *David*, *Isaiab*, *Jeremiab*, and the rest, in very distant ages, gives a distinct and uniform idea of the Supreme being, no where deviating into any thing mean, or unworthy of him; and still, even where he is spoke of in a manner suited to the general apprehension of mankind, his dignity and majesty duly kept up. Whereas there is not one of the antient Heathen poets, who gives a consistent idea of the Supreme God, or

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keeps

keeps up his character throughout. *Homer*, in the same poem, describes his *Jupiter* with a great deal of majesty, and in another represents him as deceived by his wife *Juno*, and overcome with lust and sleep, while the inferior deities are playing what tricks they please, contrary to his intention. In short, the supreme God is by *Homer* described as a bully; by *Virgil*, as a tyrant; by *Ovid*, as a beastly voluptuary; and by *Lucretius*, as a lazy drone. So that, if the cavils of the opposers of revelation, with respect to the style of Scripture, were of much more consequence than they are; it would still be the easiest, and indeed the only rational way of accounting for the amazing superiority of those writings to the greatest human productions, in spite of the disadvantages, of want of learning, and the like, which the sacred penmen laboured under; to ascribe the sentiments in them to Divine inspiration.

Other objections, as, that the genuineness of some of the books of the Bible has been disputed; those of various readings; of seeming contradictions; of doubtful interpretations; of obscurity in the Scripture chronology, and the like; all these difficulties are sufficiently cleared up by the learned apologists for revealed religion. Nor does it suit the purpose of this work to obviate all objections. Nor is it indeed necessary for the candid enquirer into the truth of Divine revelation, to attend to the various difficulties  
started

started by laborious cavillers. It is of very small consequence, what circumstantial difficulties may be raised about a scheme, whose grand lines and principal figures shew its author to be Divine; as will, it is presumed, appear to every ingenuous mind, on a careful perusal of the following general view of the whole body of revelation. Some other objections are occasionally obviated in other parts of this fourth book; and for a full view of the controversy between the opposers and defenders of revealed religion, the reader may consult the authors on that subject, recommended vol. I. page 193. In whose writings he will find full answers to the most trivial objections; and will observe, that the cavils started from time, to time by the deistical writers, have all been fully considered, and completely answered over and over; so that nothing new has been, for many years past, or is likely ever to be, advanced on the subject.

## S E C T. II.

*A compendious View of the Scheme of Divine Revelation.*

**H**OLY Scripture comprehends (though penned by a number of different authors, who lived in ages very distant from one another) a consistent and uniform scheme of all things that are necessary to be known and attended to by mankind. Nor is there any other original  
writing

writing besides, that does this. It presents us with a view of this world before its change from a chaos into an habitable state. It gives us a rational account of the procedure of the almighty Author in forming and reducing it into a condition fit for being the seat of living inhabitants, and a theatre for action. It gives an account of the origination of mankind; representing the first of the species as brought into being on purpose for discipline and obedience. It gives a general account of the various dispensations and transactions of God with regard to the rational inhabitants of this world; keeping in view throughout, and no where losing sight of, the great and important end of their creation, the training them up to goodness and virtue, in order to happiness. Every where inculcating that one grand lesson, which if mankind could but be brought to learn, it were no great matter what they were ignorant of, and without which all other knowledge is of no real value; to wit, That obedience to the Supreme Governor of the universe is the *certain*, and the *only* means of happiness; and that vice and irregularity are both naturally and judicially the causes of misery and destruction. It shews innumerable instances of the Divine displeasure against wickedness; and in order to give a full display of the fatal consequences of vice, it gives some account, either historically or prophetically, of the general state of this world in its various periods from the time of its being made

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made habitable from a chaos, to its reduction again to a chaos by fire, at the consummation of all things. Comprehending most of the great events which have happened, or are yet to happen, to most of the great empires and kingdoms, and exhibiting in brief most of what is to pass on the theatre of the world. Setting forth to the view of mankind, for their instruction, a variety of examples of real characters the most remarkable for virtue, or wickedness, with most signal and striking instances of the Divine approbation of, or displeasure against them.

It is only in Scripture, that a rational account of this world is given. For in Scripture it is represented as God's world. The inhabitants of it are every where spoken of, as no other way of consequence, than in the view of their being his creatures, formed for religion, and an immortal state of happiness after this life, and at present under laws and rules of discipline, to train them up for the great end of their being. Even in the mere historical parts, there is always an eye to the true state of things. Instead of informing us, that one prince conquered another, the Scripture account is, that it pleased God to deliver the one into the hand of the other. Instead of ascribing the revolutions of kingdoms and empires to the counsels of the wise, or the valour of the mighty, the Scripture account of them is, that they were the effect of the Divine disposal, brought about by Him, "in whose hand  
" are

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“ are the hearts of kings, who turns them which.  
“ way he pleases ; and who puts one down, and  
“ sets another up ; who does in the armies of  
“ heaven, and among the inhabitants of the  
“ earth, whatever seems good to Him, and  
“ whose hand none can stay, or say, What dost  
“ thou ?” The view given in Scripture of our  
world, and its inhabitants, and their affairs, is  
that which must appear to an eye observing from  
above, not from the earth. For Scripture alone  
gives an account of the original causes of things,  
the true springs of events, and declares the end  
from the beginning ; which shews it to be given  
by one who saw through all futurity, and by the  
same, who has been from the beginning at the  
head of the affairs of the world, who governs  
the world, and therefore knew how to give an  
account (so far as to his wisdom seemed fit to  
discover) of the whole current and course of  
events from the creation to the consummation.

We have no where, but in Scripture, a display  
of the wonders of Divine mercy for a fallen  
guilty race of beings. We have no rational ac-  
count any where else of a method for restoring a  
world ruined by vice. In Scripture we have this  
great *desideratum*. Holy Scripture shines forth  
conspicuous by its own native heavenly splen-  
dor ; Enlightning the darkness, and clearing the  
doubts, which, from the beginning of the world,  
hung upon the minds of the wisest and best of  
men, with respect to the important points, of the  
most

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acceptable manner of worshipping God; of the possibility of gaining the Divine favour and the pardon of sin; of a future state of retribution; and of the proper immortality, or perpetual existence of the soul: Giving more clear, rational, and sublime notions of God; teaching a more perfect method of worshipping and serving Him; and prescribing to mankind a distinct and explicit rule of life, guarded with the most awful sanctions, and attended with the most unquestionable evidences, internal and external, of Divine authority. Bringing to light various important and interesting truths, which no human sagacity could have found out; and establishing and confirming others, which, though pretended to have been discoverable by reason, yet greatly needed superior confirmation. Not only enlightening those countries, on which its direct beams have shone with their full splendour; but breaking through the clouds of heathenism and superstition, darting some of its Divine rays to the most distant parts of the world, and affording a glimmering light to the most barbarous nations, without which they had been buried in total darkness and ignorance as to moral and religious knowledge. Drawing aside the veil of time, and opening a prospect into eternity, and the world of spirits. Exhibiting a scheme of things incomparably more sublime than is any were else to be found; in which various orders of being, angels, archangels, thrones,

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thrones, dominions, principalities, and powers, rise in their several degrees, and tower above one another toward the perfection of the Divine nature; in comparison of which, however, they are all as nothing. Holy Scripture, in a word, takes in whatever of great, or good, can be conceived by a rational mind in the present state; whatever can be of use for raising, refining, and spiritualising human nature; for making this world a paradise, and mankind angels; for qualifying them for that eternal bliss and glory, which was the end of their being. And it is highly probable, that while the world stands, learned and inquisitive men will be from time to time discovering new wonders of Divine wisdom in that inexhaustible treasure. The continual improvement of knowledge of all kinds, and the farther and farther completion of prophecy, give reason to expect this. They, who know what amazing lights have been struck out by *Mede*, *Locke*, and a few others who have pursued their plan, will readily agree, that, as a century or two past have shewn us the Bible in a light, in which it was probably never seen before, since the apostolic age; so a century or two to come may (if mankind do not give over the study of Scripture) exhibit it in a light at present inconceivable.

That it may in a satisfactory manner appear, how important the subjects, how wide the extent, and how noble the discoveries of Scripture are; it may be proper to trace the outlines of the vast  
and



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and various prospect it exhibits, I mean, to range in order the principal subjects of revelation, as they lie in the holy books. This I will endeavour to draw out of the Bible itself, in such a manner as one wholly a stranger to our systems and controversies, and who had studied Scripture only, might be supposed to do it.

Holy Scripture begins with informing us, that God was the author and creator of the universe; which truth is also consistent with human reason; and the direct consequence to be drawn from it is, That all creatures and things are his, and that all thinking beings ought to dedicate themselves to his service, to whom they owe their existence, and whatever they have, or hope for. As the almighty Creator is a pure spirit, wholly separate from matter, or corporeal organs of any kind, it is evident, that what he produces, he does by an immediate act of volition. His power reaching to the performance of all possible things, nothing can resist his will. So that his willing, or desiring a thing to be, is producing it. His saying, or thinking, *Let there be light*, is creating light.

Scripture informs us, that the human species begun in two persons, one of each sex, created by God, and by himself put directly in the mature state of life; whereas all the particulars of the species, who have been since produced, have been created indeed by God, but introduced into human life by the instrumentality of parents.

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We learn from Scripture, that the first of our species were brought into being, not only in a state of innocence, or capacity for virtue, but likewise naturally immortal, being blest with constitutions so formed, that they would of themselves have continued uninjured by time, till it should have been thought proper to remove the species to a new and more spiritual state.

The appointment of one day in seven, as a day of rest; the sanctifying a seventh part of our time to religious purposes, was an ordinance worthy of God; and the account we have in Scripture of its having been appointed so early, by Divine authority, and as a law for the whole world, explains how we come to find the observance of a seventh day as sacred, by universal custom, mentioned in such antient writers as *Homer*, *Hesiod*, and *Callimachus*. Nor can any appointment be imagined more fit for keeping up an appearance of religion among mankind, than this. Stated solemnities, returning periodically, have, by the wisdom of all, law-givers, been thought the best expedients for keeping up the lasting remembrance of remarkable events. And it is evident, that no event better deserved to be kept in remembrance than that of the completing of the work of creation; till such time as the work of redemption, the second and best creation of man, was completed in the resurrection of the Saviour of the world. Upon which the

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first Christians sanctified the first day of the week; and, according to the best authority now to be had, the seventh likewise; though neither with the strictness required by the *Mosaic* constitution; but with that decent liberty, with which Christianity makes its votaries free.

The design of creating the human species, was to put them in the way toward such a happiness as should be fit and suitable to the nature of free moral agents. This rendered it necessary to place them in a state of discipline; the only possible method for learning virtue; and we accordingly find a lesson of obedience\* prescribed them immediately on their coming into existence. A law, to all appearance very easy to keep. Only to abstain wholly from one particular indulgence, being at liberty, within the bounds of moderation, with respect to others: In the state of things at that time, it would not have been easy to prescribe a particular trial, which should not turn upon the government of passion or appetite. Being the only two on the face of the earth, they could not be guilty of a breach of duty to fellow-creatures. And with the frequent intercourse, Scripture gives us reason to think, they had with angels, and celestial beings, they could hardly bring themselves to any positive violation of their duty to God; and were under

\* This point is not here stated as the author now thinks it ought. See the Note in page 58, of this Volume.

no temptation to neglect it. That they should fall into this fatal transgression of the first law given for trial of their obedience, was to be expected from beings newly created, and wholly unexperienced and unprincipled. Thus we see, that young children have no fixt principles sufficient to prevent their yielding to temptation: for virtue is an attachment to rectitude, and abhorrence of all moral evil, arising from reason, experience, and habit. But though this, and other deviations from obedience, were to be expected from the first of mankind, it does not follow, that such deviations were wholly innocent. Pitiable undoubtedly their case was, and the rather, in that they were misled by temptation from a wicked being more experienced than themselves. Accordingly their case, and that of the rest of the species; has found such pity, and such interpositions have been made in their favour, as we have reason, from Scripture, to suppose other offending orders of beings, particularly the fallen angels, have not been favoured with. For it is expressly said, that nothing equivalent to the Christian scheme of restoration and salvation has been planned out in favour of them; but that they are left to the consequences of their disobedience.

The natural tendency of the least deviation from moral rectitude is so dreadfully and extensively fatal, as to render it highly necessary, that the righteous Governor of the world should inflict

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some signal and parmanent mark of his displeasure on the occasion of the first transgression of the first of the species. As a wise father, who has found his child once guilty of a breach of truth, or any other foul crime, seems at first to disbelieve it, and then punishes him with the loss of his favour for a very long time after, and otherwise; in such a manner as may be likely to make a lasting impression on his mind, and deter him from a repetition of his fault. Scripture informs us, accordingly, that immediately upon the first offence, the transgressors, and in them the whole species, were sunk from their natural immortality, and condemned to a state obnoxious to death.

Whether eating the forbidden fruit was not the natural, as well as judicial cause of disease and death, it is needless to dispute; but what is said of the tree of life in the book of *Genesis*, and afterwards in the *Apocahypse*, as if it were a natural antidote, or cure for mortality, and the means of preserving life, is very remarkable.

Death, the consequence of the first transgression, and which has been merited by innumerable succeeding offences, was pronounced upon mankind on purpose to be to all ages a standing memorial of the Divine displeasure against disobedience. With the same view also, Scripture informs us, the various natural evils, of the barrenness of the earth, inclement seasons, and the other grievances, under which nature at present

groans, were inflicted; that men might nowhere turn their eyes or their thoughts, where they should not meet a caveat against vice and irregularity.

Here I cannot help observing, by the by, in how ridiculous a light the Scripture account of the fatal and important consequences of the first transgression shews the usual superficial apologies made by wretched mortals in excuse of their vices and follies. One crime is the effect of thoughtlessness. They did not, forsooth, consider how bad such an action was. Another is a natural action. Drunkenness is only an immoderate indulgence of a natural appetite; and so on. Have such excuses as these been thought sufficient in the case before us? The eating of the forbidden fruit was only indulging a natural appetite directly contrary to the Divine command. And it is very likely, that our first parents did not duly attend to all the probable consequences of their transgression. But neither of these apologies, nor the inexperience of the offenders, nor their being overcome by temptation, were sufficient to avert the Divine displeasure, the marks of which, we and our world bear to this hour. Disobedience to a known law given by our Creator and Governor is always to be looked upon with horror. And no false apology ought to be thought of: for we may assure ourselves, none will be admitted before our all-seeing Judge, who is not to be deceived.

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The next remarkable object of our consideration, in this general survey of Scripture, is a dark prophecy of a conquest to be gained, by one miraculously descended of our species, over the grand enemy and first seducer of mankind; which also implies some comfortable hopes of a restoration of the human race to the Divine favour.

The next dispensation of Heaven, which we read of in Scripture, is that most awful and remarkable judgement of the universal deluge, by which the human race were, for the universal corruption of their manners, at once swept off the face of the earth, and the world cleansed from the impurity of its inhabitants. Nothing can be conceived more proper for making a powerful and lasting impression on mankind, or convincing them of the Divine abhorrence of vice and disobedience, than to be informed, that it occasioned the cutting off, or unmaking, the whole species, except eight persons, whom their singular virtue preserved amidst the general wreck of nature.

It is remarkable, that after the flood, we find the period of man's life considerably reduced below the standard of it in the antediluvian age. This is no more than was to be expected, considering what use the antients had made of the great length of life they enjoyed. The abridging the term of human life is also a standing memorial of the Divine displeasure against vice. It  
naturally

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naturally tends, by bringing death nearer the view of even the youngest, to lessen mens attachment to the present state, and lead them to think of one better, and more lasting. By this means also, the opportunities of offending being lessened, the guilt and punishment of wretched mortals comes to be very considerably diminished.

The laws given to *Noah* upon his coming out of the ark, seem to be intended for mankind in general, as he was the common father of all who have lived since his time. And we know of no general repeal of them. The liberty of killing animals for food is derived wholly from hence; a right which we could not otherwise pretend to. Nor can the opposers of the Divine authority of Scripture shew any pretence for killing a living creature for food, or any shadow of title which the human species have to the life of any creature whatever, but this grant from the Author of life, and Maker of all creatures, who alone has a right to dispose of the lives of his creatures.

The command for putting to death every murderer without exception, which law is no where repealed, seems effectually to cut off all power of pardoning that atrocious crime. And many crowned heads have accordingly made it a rule never to extend their mercy to offenders of that sort.

As to the prohibition of blood, its obligation on us has been disputed. But, as the blood is



the seat of almost every disease, and is a gross, unwholesome, and nauseous substance, consisting of earth, salt, and phlegm, the best way is evidently to abstain from it, and so make sure of avoiding a breach of a prohibition. And indeed, in all doubtful cases, prudence will always direct to keep on the safe side. At the same time, the excessive scrupulousness of the *Jews* about the least particle of blood is absurd. The prohibition is only against eating an animal with the blood in it. And the intention was probably two-fold. One for the advantage of health; the other religious; that, in shedding the blood of the animal, a libation or offering might thereby be paid to the Lord of life, and Giver of all gifts.

The account we have in Scripture of the building of the tower of *Babel*, the confusion of tongues, and scattering the people abroad into different countries, is most naturally solved by supposing their design to have been, to set up an universal empire, whose established religion should be idolatry and polytheism. This being quite contrary to the Divine intention in blessing mankind with a revelation from himself, it was not fit, that it should be suffered to take place, at a time, when there was no nation in the world, in which the worship of the true God prevailed. The disappointment of such a design is therefore a Divine dispensation fit to be recorded in Scripture.

The

The destruction of the cities of the Plain, for their abominable and unnatural vices, is a Divine judgement very fit to be related in the records of the dispensations of God to mankind. For such exemplary vengeance on the inhabitants of whole towns, upon kingdoms and empires, and upon the whole world together, as we have authentic accounts of in Scripture, shews, that numbers, instead of alleviating, do in fact aggravate the guilt of offenders, and draw down a swifter and surer destruction. When we read in Scripture of kingdoms broken in pieces, of cities destroyed by fire from Heaven, of nations partly driven from their own country, and scattered abroad over the face of the earth, and partly given up to be massacred by a bloody enemy; and of the whole inhabitants of the world swept at once into a watery grave; all for vices fashionable in those times, and patronised by the great; when we read such accounts of the effects of following fashion, and imitating great examples, we must have very little thought, if we can bring ourselves to imagine, that there is any safety in giving up conscience to fashion, or that such an excuse will at all alleviate our guilt, or punishment. While we are in the full pursuit and enjoyment of folly and vice, we rejoice in going along with the multitude, not considering, how much we shall wish hereafter, that we had been singular and unfashionable, like the illustrious heroes of antient times, *Noah, Lot, and Abraham,*

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*Abraham*, who had the courage to stand the empty raillery of their cotemporaries, singular in their virtue, and singular in the reward of it. Those, who now encourage us in vice and folly, will not hereafter assist us in suffering their appointed consequences. And the appearance of God, angels, and just men, on the side of virtue at last, will make another sort of shew for keeping its votaries in countenance, than that of the fine folks does now for the support of the opposite practice.

The most remarkable instance that ever was given of the Divine approbation, and distinguishing favour for singular goodness, is in the case of *Abraham*. This venerable patriarch, according to the Scripture account, was a faithful worshipper of the true God, while the whole world was sunk in idolatry and superstition. He is on that account honoured with the glorious titles of Father of the faithful, and Friend of God; appointed head of the family, from whence the *Messiah* was to spring; and his posterity chosen of God for a peculiar people, the keepers of the Divine oracles, and the only witnesses for the true God, against an idolatrous world. He himself is called from his own country, and directed by Divine authority to remove to a distant land; he is tried and improved by difficulties: for hardships are often marks of the Divine favour, rather than the contrary. That the honours shewn him in consequence of his singular piety might

might be conspicuous to the whole world, they do not drop with him; but are continued to his posterity, who have been, and are likely to be, the most remarkable people on earth, and distinguished from all others, as long as the world lasts.

It is very remarkable, that there is hardly a great character in Scripture, in which we have not an express account of some blemish. A very strong presumption, that the narration is taken from truth; not fancy. Of this illustrious pattern of heroic and singular virtue, some instances of shameful timidity, and diffidence in the Divine providence, are related. Of *Moses* some marks of peevishness are by himself confessed. The character of the Divine psalmist is shaded with some gross faults. *Solomon*, the wisest of men, is recorded to have been guilty of the greatest folly. Several of the prophets are censured for their misbehaviour. The weakness and timidity of the apostles in general, in forsaking their Master in his extremity, are faithfully represented by themselves, and even the aggravated crime of denying him with oaths (to say nothing of *Judas's* treachery) not concealed. This is not the strain of a romance. The inventors of a plausible story would not have purposely disparaged the characters of their heroes in such a manner, to gain no rational end whatever.

One useful and noble instruction from this remarkable mixture in the characters of the  
Scripture-

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Scripture-worthies, is, That human nature, in its present state, is at best greatly defective, and liable to fatal errors, which, at the same time, if not persisted in, but reformed, do not hinder a character from being predominantly good, or disqualify a person from the Divine mercy; which, it is to be hoped, has been the case of many in all ages, nations, and religions, though none perfect. Which teaches us the proper course we ought to take, when we discover in ourselves any wicked tendency, or have fallen into any gross error; to wit, Not to give ourselves up to despair; but to resolve bravely to reform it, and recover our virtue.

We are told in Scripture, that the descendents of *Abraham* were, by a peculiar providence, carried into *Egypt*. The design of this was, probably, to communicate to that people, the parents of learning in those early times, some knowledge of the God of *Abraham*, which might remain after they were gone from thence, and from them might spread to the other nations around. The signal miracles wrought by *Moses*; the ten immediate judgments inflicted upon the people of *Egypt*; the deliverance of the *Israelites* from their bondage, with a high hand, in open defiance of the *Egyptian* power, under the conduct of a shepherd; and the destruction of the whole *Egyptian* army, in their endeavour to stop their flight; these conspicuous interpositions ought to have convinced that people, that the God whom the

*Israelites*

*Israelites* worshiped was superior to their baffled idol and brute deities. But bigotry, and the force of education, are hardly to be conquered by any means whatever.

We have an account in Scripture of *Moses's* conducting the *Israelites* through the vast desert of *Arabia*, for forty years together, with a continued series of miraculous interpositions (their march itself one of the greatest of miracles) in order to their establishment in the country appointed them. The design of their not being sooner put in possession of the promised country, was, as we are informed by *Moses* himself, to break and punish their perverse and rebellious temper; for which reason also, only two of those, who came out of *Egypt*, reached the promised country; all the rest dying in the wilderness. Nor did even *Moses* himself attain the happiness of enjoying the promised land; which he also foresaw he should not, and therefore could have no selfish views for himself, in putting himself at the head of this unruly people, to wander all his life, and at last perish in a howling wilderness; when he might have lived in ease and luxury in the *Egyptian* court. And that he had no scheme for aggrandizing his family, is evident from his leaving them in the station of common *Levites*.

The people of *Israel*, arriving at the promised country, proceed, by Divine command, to extirpate the whole people, who then inhabited it,  
and

and to take possession of it for themselves and their posterity. And there is no doubt, but any other people may, at any time, do the same, upon the same authority. For, He, who made the earth, may give the kingdoms of it to whom he will. And it is fit, that they who are not worthy to inherit a good land, should be driven out of it. Which was the case with the people, who inhabited the land of *Canaan*; upon the arrival of the *Israelites* there. For at that time, we are told, the measure of their iniquity was full. The *Israelites* therefore were authorised utterly to destroy them, for their enormous wickedness; and to take possession of their country; not on account of their own goodness; but, as expressly and frequently declared, in remembrance of *Abraham*, the pious founder of the nation. If the ancient Pagan inhabitants of *Canaan* were driven out before the *Israelites*, as a proof of God's displeasure against their idolatry, and other crimes, nothing could be a more proper warning to the people of *Israel*, to avoid falling into the same vices, which they saw bring utter extirpation upon the natives of the country. Nor could any surer proof be given the nations around, of the superiority of the God of the *Israelites*, to the idols they worshiped, than his giving victory to his votaries (a seemingly fugitive, unarmed, mixed multitude of men, women and children) over powerful and warlike nations, under regular discipline, and in their own country.

Here is again another pregnant instance of the different consequences of virtue, and of vice. Several great and powerful kingdoms overturned for national wickedness.

It is evident from the strain of Scripture, that the people of *Israel* were set up as an example to all nations, of God's goodness to the obedient, and severity to disobedience. It was from the beginning, before their entrance upon the promised land, foretold them by *Moses*, that, if they continued attached to the worship of the true God, and obedient to his laws, they should be great and happy above all nations; the peculiar care of heaven, and the repository of the true religion: But if they revolted from their God, and degenerated into idolatry and vice, they were, as a punishment, to be driven out of their country, and scattered into all nations under heaven. Which punishment was also to turn to the general advantage of mankind: as the more pious among them would naturally carry the knowledge of the true God into all the countries where they were scattered; which happened accordingly.

In order to the settlement of this remarkable people in the land appointed them, as a theocracy, or government immediately under God, a body of civil laws is given them directly from heaven by the hand of *Moses*; a visible supernatural glory, called, the *Shekinah*, abiding constantly among them, as an emblem of the Divine presence,



presence, and an oracle to have recourse to in all difficulties. A civil polity established for them, calculated in the best manner possible for preventing avarice, ambition, corruption, exorbitant riches, oppression, or sedition among themselves, and attacks from the surrounding nations upon them, or temptations to draw them into a desire of conquest; in which last particulars the *Jewish* constitution exceeded the *Spartan*, the most perfect of all human schemes of government, and the best calculated to secure universal happiness.

In a theocracy, or Divine government, it was to be expected that religion should be the foundation of the civil constitution. And had that people been able to bear a purely spiritual scheme of religion, there is no doubt, but such a one had been given them. As it is, we plainly trace their laws up to their Divine original. In the decalogue, the foundation of their whole legislation, we find the very first law sets forth the Divine scheme in separating them from the other nations of the world, viz. To keep up, in one country at least, the knowledge and worship of the true God, against the universal idolatry and superstition, which prevailed in the rest of the world. The foundation of all their laws, civil and religious, is therefore laid in the first commandment; in which they are expressly forbid to hold any other deity, but that of the Supreme. As their whole law is summed up in the two great precepts

precepts of Loving God, and Loving their fellow-creatures.

In this compend of the original law given to the *Jews*, it is extremely remarkable, that these two grand precepts are directly obligatory upon the mind. Which proves either, that this body of laws was given by Him who knows the inward motions of the mind, as well as the outward actions, and can punish the irregularities of the one, as well as the other, or that the author of it, supposing it a mere human invention, was a man of no manner of thought or consideration. For what mere human lawgiver, who was in his senses, could think of making a prohibition, which he never could punish, nor so much as know, whether his laws were kept, or violated? But the whole character of *Moses*, the wisdom of the laws he framed for the people of *Israel*, his plan of government, preferable to the best human schemes, and which accordingly continued longer than any of them ever did, without the addition, or repeal of one law; these shew this most antient and venerable legislator to have been above any such gross absurdity, as would have appeared in making laws obligatory on the mind, which is naturally free, and whose motions are cognizable by no judge, but the Searcher of hearts; and all this without any authority above human. And, that intentions, as well as actions, were accordingly commonly punished in

that people, is plain from their history. But to proceed.

In the second commandment, the worship even of the true God, by images or representations, is prohibited, as leading naturally to unworthy ideas of a pure, incorporeal, infinitely perfect mind; and as symbolizing with the idolatry of the nations around. In the third, the due reverence for the name, and consequently the attributes, and honours, of the Divine majesty, is secured by a most awfull threatening against those, who should be guilty of any irreverent manner of treating the tremendous name of God. And the fourth sets apart one day in seven, as sacred to God and religion.

The remaining six laws secure the observance of duty with respect to the life, chastity, property, and reputation of others; which sett of laws are very properly founded in due reverence to parents, from whom all relative and social obligations take their rise. And in the tenth commandment, there is again another instance suitable to the Divine authority, which enacted those laws; this precept being obligatory on the mind only, and having no regard to any outward action.

The people of *Israel*, as observed above, were of a temper too gross and earthly to be capable of a religion, like the Christian, wholly spiritual. Those early ages of the world were not sufficiently improved, to be, in general, fit for any thing  
above

above mere sense ; or however, were more likely to be affected by what was fit to act upon the senses, than what might be addressed to the understanding. A body of religious ceremonies was therefore incorporated with, and made a part of their polity, or constitution. But even in them, the ultimate design of separating that people from all others is every where visible, and almost every particular holds it forth. For the religious ceremonies may in general be considered as tending to give typical representations of the Christian scheme, which was the finishing of all the Divine dispensations ; under which head may be comprehended the various sacrifices and oblations ; and to keep the people continually in mind of their being in a state of guilt before God ; for which purpose the ceremonial purifications were properly adapted ; to prevent their deviating into idolatry, by giving them a religion, which might employ them, and in some respect suit their gross apprehensions ; accordingly, the ceremonies of the law are in Scripture called imperfect statutes, and carnal ordinances ; to prove a yoke and punishment for their frequent tendency to idolatry, and image-worship ; the ceremonial law is therefore called in Scripture an intolerable yoke ; and to convey many noble morals under sensible signs, of which one considerable one may be, That by the frequent infliction of death on the victims offered, they might never be suffered to forget, that death is the wages of sin.

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We have in Scripture the history of that most extraordinary people partly related, and partly predicted, during a period of above three thousand years, making a continued series of miraculous interpositions (for their present state is as much so, as any of the past) in which the various unexampled vicissitudes they have undergone, and which they are yet to pass through, are evidently owing to direct interpositions of Divine providence, and are all along the immediate consequence of their behaviour to their God.

Thus, to mention a few remarkable instances, if they murmur against *Moses* in the wilderness, and worship idols of their own making, their carcases fall there, and none of them is allowed to enter the promised land, which is given to their children. If they avaritiously, and contrary to command, keep the spoils of the heathenish enemy, they are vanquished in the next engagement. If they be obedient to God, and attack their enemies in full confidence of the Divine strength, they conquer. If one king sets up the worship of idols, the Divine vengeance punishes him and his people. If another destroys the high places, where those infamous rites were celebrated, all goes well in his time. If a succession of inspired prophets is raised among them, to keep them in mind of their allegiance to God, and they put them to death, one after another, for their unacceptable freedom, in reproving the prevailing vices of both king and people; and de-

viate, from time to time, through the infection of the neighbouring countries, into idolatry and vice, they are carried away captive to *Babylon*. If they repent of their fatal degeneracy, and remember their God, whom they have forsaken, he turns their captivity, and brings about their restoration to their own land once more. And lastly, if they fill up the measure of their iniquity by imbruing their wicked hands in the blood of their *Messiah*, they are totally rooted out of the land, which was given to their fathers; their temple is demolished; their country given to the *Gentiles*, and themselves so scattered abroad in all nations, that greater numbers of them may be found almost in any country than their own; and to this dispersion, which has already continued for upwards of seventeen hundred years, is added, according to the prediction of *Moses*, such uncommon distress, as is not to be equalled in the history of any other nation:

The early, and total dispersion of the ten tribes, without any return hitherto (though it is expected, according to antient prophecy, in the last ages of the world) ought to have been considered by them, as an awful warning of what the remaining part of that people might expect to be their own fate, if they proved disobedient. And from the history of the whole twelve tribes, one of the noblest and most important morals may be drawn, viz. That a nation may expect to prosper, or sink, according as it is favoured

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by Divine providence, or the contrary ; and that therefore virtue is the only sure foundation of national happiness.

But after all their irregularities, and degeneracies from their God, and his obedience and worship, they are all (the posterity of the ten tribes, as well as the two) according to antient prophecy, to be finally replaced in their own country, in greater happiness and glory than ever. All which peculiar honours, important dispensations, and singular interpositions for this people, the posterity of *Abraham*, are intended as a standing proof, during a period of near four thousand years already, and how much longer God knows, of what value, in the sight of God, the singular piety of that venerable patriarch was, for whom it seems as if he could not (so to speak) do favours enough even to the latest posterity of him who had greatly stood up alone for the worship of the true God against a whole world sunk in idolatry.

Prophecy makes a very considerable part of revelation. In the predictions of Scripture, there is found some account of the future fate of many of the empires and cities, which have made the greatest figure in the world. From whence we learn, that the author of prophecy is the God of the *Gentiles*, as well as of the *Jews*. That neither his prescience, nor his power, is limited to the affairs of any one nation whatever.

No

No branch of Scripture-prophecy is so interesting to us, as those which hold forth the coming of the *Messiah*, and his kingdom, which shine more and more clearly, from the first obscure one given immediately after the fall, "That the seed of the woman should bruise the Serpent's head;" down through a period of four thousand years, to those plain ones given by *Zacharias* the priest, *Simeon*, *Anna*, and *John* the Baptist, his immediate fore-runner; and thus the important designs of God with regard to mankind, opened by degrees, every great prophecy carrying on the view to the last glorious ages; till at length our Saviour himself comes as a light into the world, and carries his sublime informations, and heavenly precepts, immensely beyond what had been done by all the prophets, lawgivers, and philosophers, opening a prospect into eternity, and bringing life and immortality to light. Of prophecy more hereafter.

The history of our Saviour's birth, life, miracles, doctrine, predictions, death, resurrection, and ascension, makes a very considerable part of Scripture.

The Christian scheme itself may be considered as the publication of an act of grace to a rebellious world, and of the terms upon which God will mercifully receive mankind into favour. The sublime, the interesting, and comfortable views it exhibits are these.



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God, the Original of all being, the Father of mankind, who brought the species into existence, with a view wholly to their happiness, willing to forgive his offending guilty creatures upon any terms consistent with the honour of his government; but at the same time displeased with vice and irregularity, and not to be reconciled to offenders, but upon proper conditions. Or in other words, the Christian religion represents Almighty God in the twofold character of the wise and righteous Governor of the moral world, and of the tender and merciful Father of his creatures.

The Christian scheme represents the human species, who were originally, as all orders of rational beings, obliged to a perfect obedience to the Divine authority, and, in consequence of that, insured of a happy immortality; universally degenerate, and become obnoxious to punishment by disobedience. Which renders some expedient necessary for saving them from destruction, consistently with the dignity of the Divine government.

The third character concerned in the Christian scheme is the *Messiah*, the son of God; who is in it exhibited as leaving his celestial state, and assuming the human nature, to give up voluntarily his life for the sins of mankind, in order to their being restored to a capacity of pardon upon repentance and reformation.

In the blameless life of this glorious person, while on earth, a perfect example is set before mankind of obedience to the Divine laws; and in his sufferings, of patience and resignation to the will of God.

In his doctrines, the perfections of God are more clearly manifested to mankind, than by any, or all the other teachers, that ever appeared. The evil of vice, the excellency of virtue, and their respective connexions with happiness and misery; more fully set forth. The dignity of the human nature more gloriously manifested, in the importance of the scheme for the restoration of man, and the high elevation to which Christianity teaches to aspire. The proper and acceptable method of worshiping God, declared. The certainty of obtaining pardon, upon repentance and reformation. The future resurrection of the body, and the everlasting and increasing happiness of the whole man, ascertained beyond doubt.

In his laws, the whole duty of man is more fully and perfectly declared, and with an authority, to which no other lawgiver could pretend; which authority he confirms by unquestionable miracles, and predictions fully accomplished; by conferring on his followers the power of working miracles; and especially by rising from the dead, according to his own prediction. The substance of the preceptive part of Christianity is contained in the following paragraph:

On

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On account of the death and intercession of the *Messiah*, that perfect and blameless obedience, which is naturally the indispensable duty of man, and all rational creatures, the defect of, which made an expiation and intercession necessary, is graciously dispensed with; and instead of it, thorough repentance for all our offences, which implies the reformation of them, as far as human frailty will admit, and a candid reception and steady belief of the Christian religion, and sincere endeavours to obey its laws, and to attain the perfection of its graces and virtues, accepted, and made the condition of pardon and everlasting happiness. Which are, love, reverence, gratitude and obedience to God. Love, gratitude, and obedience to *Christ*, through whom, as the appointed intercessor, we are by revelation taught to address the Almighty Father of all, and whose death we are to commemorate according to his appointment. Thankfulness to the Holy Spirit, the comforter, and inspirer. Benevolence to men. Temperance with respect to our own passions and appetites. Humility, meekness, chastity, purity of heart, integrity in thought and word; mercy, charity, and the performance of all the social and relative duties of life; forgiving of injuries, loving enemies, prudence without cunning; zeal without rancor; steadiness without obstinacy; contempt of riches, honours, pleasures, and all worldly things: courage to stand up for the truth in spite of the applause or threatenings

nings of men, attention above all things to the concerns of futurity; vigilance against temptations from within, and from the allurements of the world; and perseverance to the end in aspiring after the inestimable prize of a glorious and happy immortality.

Christianity proposes the noblest motives to obedience, that can be conceived, and the fittest for influencing such an order of beings as mankind. The most sordid and stupid is likely to be alarmed by the threatnings of a punishment inconceivably terrible, and of immense duration. The natural consequence of which fear is, its being deterred from vice, and forced to think of reforming. From whence the next step is into sobriety, or negative goodness. Which leads naturally to the practice of direct virtue; and, as practice produces habit, the issue to be expected is, a habit of virtue; an attachment to goodness; farther and farther degrees of improvement; and in the end such a perfection in the government of passion and appetite, in benevolence to mankind, and piety to God, as will, upon the Christian plan, qualify for future happiness. Thus, the denunciation of future punishment for vice, which Christianity sets forth, is evidently a wise and proper means for promoting virtue. Especially, if we add the encouragement of certainty of pardon, upon repentance and reformation, which important point we owe wholly to revelation. And if we also take in the  
views

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views of the supernatural assistance which Christianity encourages well-disposed persons to expect in their conflict with temptation and vice; and those high honours, and that sublime happiness, which revealed religion sets before mankind, as the consequence of a victorious perseverance in virtue. The fitness of such motives for powerfully influencing such an order of beings, as the human species, is a proof, that the religion which proposes them, is of him, who formed the human species; who endowed mankind with reason, with hope, and fear, made the mind susceptible of habit; and stamped upon it the idea of immortality. For none, but He, who formed the mind, and perfectly knew its springs, could address it in a way so proper for influencing it, and for bringing it, in a consistency with its nature, and present state, to the steady love and practice of virtue.

We have likewise in Scripture an account of the establishment of the Christian religion, and the firm adherence of its first professors in spite of persecution. Addresses from the first propagators of Christianity to their proselytes, explaining more fully the doctrines of religion, solving their difficulties, encouraging them to constancy, and giving them useful directions for the conduct of life. And predictions of the future state of the church, its degeneracy into popery, and the consummation of all things.

Here

Here the amazing scheme, being completed, comes to a period. The Divine dispensations with regard to mankind, in their present state, having been finished in the establishment of the Christian religion in the world, nothing more is to be expected, but the completion of the predictions yet unfulfilled, of which the chief are, the restoration of the *Israelites* and *Jews* to their own country, with the conversion of the world in general to the Christian religion, which makes way for the last glorious ages ; for the renovation, and consummation of all things ; for the general judgment of the whole human race according to the characters they have sustained in life, the condemnation, and utter destruction of such of the species, as shall be found to have rendered themselves unworthy, and incapable of the Divine mercy, and the establishment of the pious and virtuous in an everlasting state of glory and happiness, in order to their improving and rising higher and higher to all eternity.

Can any man, who only runs through this brief and imperfect sketch of the whole body of revelation, bring himself to believe, that such a scheme could have been begun with the beginning of the world, carried on through a succession of four thousand years, by the instrumentality of a number of different persons, who had no opportunity of concerting measures together ; exhibiting to the view of mankind all that is great, important, and useful to be known and practised,

practised, all the Divine dispensations with respect to a species of rational moral agents, the scope and purpose of the whole being wise, good, worthy of God, and suitable to the wants of men, uniform in its purpose throughout, teaching one grand, and useful lesson from the beginning to the end, agreeing with itself, with the constitution and course of nature, the strain of history, and the natural reason of man, in which there appears a perfect agreement betwixt types and antitypes, doctrines and precepts, predictions and completions, laws and sanctions, pretensions and truth; and the whole leading directly to the highest improvement and perfection of human nature; can any man bring himself to believe such an universal all-comprehensive scheme to be really no more than human contrivance? But of this more hereafter.

## S E C T. III.

*Considerations on some Particulars in Revealed Religion.*

THE reader may remember, that I put off the subject of providence, though commonly reckoned a doctrine of natural religion, till I should be upon revelation; because it is from thence that it receives its principal confirmation and establishment.

The opinion, that the world, and all things animate and inanimate, are by the infinite Author

of all, supported in their existence, and conducted in all the changes of state, which they undergo, is as antient as the belief of the Divine existence. As to the natural or material world, it is certain, from reason and experience, that the inactivity of matter is inseparable from its nature. All the laws of nature, as deduced from experience and observation, are founded upon this axiom, That matter does necessarily continue in that state in which it is at present, whether of rest, or of direct motion, till it be put out of that state by some living agent. To imagine matter capable of itself, of changing its state of rest into that of motion, or of motion into rest, would be supposing it something else than matter; for it is essential to the idea of matter, that it resist all impressions made upon it. Unresisting matter is a self-contradictory idea, as much as noisy silence, vicious virtue, or the like. There is not one appearance, or effect, in the natural world, that could have been brought about by unresisting matter. Upon the *inertia* of matter, the whole course of nature depends. To say, that matter, however modified, is capable of being made to have any tendency to change its place or state, would be ascribing to it a power of choosing and refusing. For before it can of itself change its state of rest for motion, or of motion for rest, it must choose for itself. If a particle of matter is to move itself, which way shall it move? If you determine



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determine eastward, westward, southward, or northward; the question immediately arises, why should it move eastward rather than westward, or southward rather than northward? To ascribe thought, or choice, or activity of any kind, to matter, however modified, is ascribing to it what contradicts its very nature and essence. For its nature and essence is to continue for ever inactive. So that, wherever we see a portion of matter in motion, it is certain, that it is moved by the action of some living agent. Farther, if we found in the natural world no motions carried on, but what proceeded in direct lines, it might be conceivable, that the matter of the universe had received such an impulse at the beginning, as had continued its motions till now. For, matter, put once in motion, must, if left to itself, move on in a direct course to eternity. But whoever has considered the natural world, will reflect, that there are a great many different motions continually going on in the universe, some of which are directly contrary to others. That the forces, with which bodies tend to one another, and with which some solid substances cohere, are immensely great, while the ease, with which the lightest bodies pass through the space, in which those forces prevail, makes it inconceivable, that any thing material is the cause of those strong tendencies. This therefore obliges us to have recourse to something immaterial, as the cause of the endlessly various, complicated, and contrary tendencies,

tendencies, which we see prevail in nature. In the solar system, supposing, as some have fancied, a set of subtle particles continually flowing inward, toward the sun, to produce the effect of gravitation, there must be another influx of the same sort of particles from all parts toward each of the planets, for they too are endowed (to use the common expression) with the power of attracting toward themselves whatever is within the sphere of their attraction. It is evident, that the course of the particles, which cause gravitation toward the sun, must be in part directly contrary to that which causes the gravitation of the satellites of a planet toward it. And the streams of particles flowing inward, toward each of the satellites of a planet, must be in part directly contrary to the course of those which flow toward the planet itself. The planet also continually changing place, no possible influx of particles toward it can produce the effect required, because that direction of such influx, which would be favourable in one situation, must of course be quite contrary in another. And upon the planet itself, if there are any animals or vegetables, any material substances, in which there is either secretion, motion of fluids, corruption, decay, or renovation, the contrariety of the course of the particles, by which such internal motions are carried on, must be such as to produce absolute confusion; for we must at last conceive, throughout all created space, an infinite number of

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streams of small particles flowing in all directions, which could, by the very supposition, produce no regular motion in the material system. Besides, we know, that the forces of attraction and gravitation are not as the surfaces of bodies attracting one another; but as the number of particles contained in them, which requires a power that shall freely pervade the most solid bodies, not merely affect their surfaces. We likewise know, that elastic matter tends every way, or endeavours to diffuse itself wider and wider, and to repel its own particles, and every surrounding body. This power, or tendency (to use the common improper term) is by no means consistent with any theory of streams of particles flowing any one way; but is easily explicable by that of an infinite Mind within all matter.

There is, in short, no solution of the various and opposite tendencies of the parts of the material system, that is not palpably absurd, besides having recourse to an infinite Mind, in which the visible world has its being, and by which it not only was at first put into motion, like a clock wound up and set a going; but is continually, from moment to moment, actuated according to certain fixed rules or methods, which are what we call the laws of nature.

If therefore we find it necessary, on account of the necessary inactivity of matter, which has nothing in its nature equal to the complicated motions, which we see in the system of the world,

to conclude, that the infinite Author of nature does continually, either mediately or immediately, exert his indefatigable power in conducting and actuating the inanimate machine; we cannot suppose less, than that he bestows as much of his attention and superintendency upon the moral system, as upon the natural; for the latter, having been produced for the sake of the former, shews the former to be of superior value.

The superintendency of a world infinite in extent, and containing an infinite number of particulars, would evidently be no more than what infinite power and omnipresence would be fully equal to. So that the thought of any shadow of difficulty in governing the universe, ought never to enter into our minds.

To suppose great part of the scheme of providence carried on by the ministration of angels, or other created beings, comes to the same, as ascribing all to the immediate agency of the supreme. For every created being in the universe, the highest seraph, as well as the meanest reptile, derives all his powers from the Supreme, and depends from moment to moment, upon the universal Author of existence, for his being, and the exertion of all his powers.

The promiscuous distribution of happiness and misery in this life, or what we commonly call good or bad fortune, is no sort of objection to the doctrine of a providence. The continual and certain consequences of virtue and vice respectively,

the immediate interposition of heaven, on every occasion, would have been wholly inconsistent with a state of discipline. And yet there is a general scheme as visibly carried on in the moral world, as in the natural; though many particulars in both lie out of the reach of our weak faculties.

To say, that it is disparaging the Divine wisdom to alledge the necessity or propriety of a continual exertion of power in the natural world, which ought rather to be supposed to have been so constituted at first as to proceed of itself, without the continued application of the Almighty hand; this objection, duly considered, has no manner of weight. For, if the material world was to exist at all, it was necessary it should be what by the very nature of matter it must be; that is, inanimate and inactive. And if so, it must be actuated, or be motionless, or at least it must have no complex motions. The truth is, a self-moving complicated material machine, is a contradiction in terms; and therefore what could not possibly exist.

If we consider that the infinite Mind inhabits all created and uncreated space, we shall think it as proper in Him to actuate continually the immense machine of the universe, to every atom of which he is immediately present, as for a human mind to actuate the body it inhabits. And no one in his senses ever thought, it would have been better, that the body should have been made to perform its functions like a clock once wound

wound up, than that it should be continually, from moment to moment, at the command of the mind, to actuate it at pleasure.

In the same manner, with respect to the moral world, it is not lessening the wisdom or power of the universal moral Governor, to suppose interpositions necessary. There are various considerations, which shew the contrary.

In general, that of the present frail and pitiable state of human nature; the circumstance of an evil being's having got an ascendancy over mankind; of the first introduction of vice being through temptation, which may be our peculiar misfortune; of our being perhaps one of the lowest orders of moral agents; these circumstances may render it proper, that *we at least* should have some extraordinary assistance given us, that there should be some peculiar interpositions in our favour. Now, to suppose a positive providential oeconomy and superintendency carried on, is supposing the easiest possible scheme for gaining such ends as might be wanted for the advantage of our species.

Communities seem to require a providence, to reward, or punish their behaviour in their national and public character, as on occasion of the observance, or breach of laws of nations, or alliances. The rewards and punishments of the future state will be personal. Good men, being guilty of faults, ought to suffer in this world, though they come to final happiness in the next;

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that evil may not wholly escape; which seems to infer the propriety of a providence. The wonderful discovery of the perpetrators of horrid crimes, particularly murder, is a strong presumption of the truth of this doctrine.

But revelation puts this matter wholly out of doubt; as it every where goes upon the supposition of a continual Divine superintendency over the natural and moral world. For it represents this world as God's world, created, preserved, continually conducted, and hereafter to be judged by Him. It exhibits a scheme of the Divine conduct of the affairs of the world in general, and of one nation in particular\*, which is altogether inconsistent, without taking in the idea of a providence. Prophecy, and miracles, of which it is full, necessarily suppose Divine interposition. And Holy Scripture in a variety of places expressly affirms the doctrine of providence. For it informs us,

“ That God preserveth, and upholdeth all  
“ things by the word of his power; and that  
“ they continue to this day according to his ordinance. That he has appointed seed-time  
“ and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter: and that they shall not cease, while the  
“ earth remaineth. That with Him is the  
“ fountain of life. That he preserves man and

\* See Page 346. et seqq.

“ beast,

“beast, and gives food to all flesh. That in his  
 “hand is the soul of every living thing, and the  
 “breath of every creature. That in him we  
 “live, and move, and have our being, who holds  
 “our souls in life, and will be our guide even  
 “to death. That he preserves us, whilst we  
 “sleep, and when we wake; when we go out,  
 “and when we come in, even from the womb,  
 “making us to dwell in safety. That he is the  
 “universal King, and Judge of all, and does ac-  
 “cording to his will in the armies of heaven,  
 “and among the inhabitants of the earth. That  
 “angels, archangels, principalities and powers,  
 “thrones and dominions, are subject to Him,  
 “and that they rejoice to do his commandments,  
 “hearkening to his word. That he gives fruit-  
 “ful seasons on earth, and crowns the year with  
 “his goodness; and again, at his pleasure, shuts  
 “up heaven, that there be no rain, and that the  
 “land yield not her increase; turning a fruitful  
 “land into barrenness, for the wickedness of them  
 “that dwell therein. That the Most high rules  
 “in the kingdom of men, and gives it to whom-  
 “soever he will. That he puts down one, and  
 “sets another up. That by him kings reign,  
 “and princes bear rule. That unless he keep  
 “the city, the watchmen watch in vain. That  
 “he increases the nations; and again destroys  
 “them; that he enlarges, and straitens them at  
 “his pleasure. That whenever he speaks con-  
 “cerning a nation, to build and to plant, or to



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“ pluck up and destroy it, his counsel shall stand,  
 “ and he will do all his pleasure. That from  
 “ him comes every good and perfect gift; and  
 “ at the same time, there is no (penal) evil in the  
 “ world, which he has not sent. That he kills,  
 “ and makes alive; that he wounds, and heals;  
 “ brings down to the grave, and brings up again,  
 “ at pleasure. That the preparations of the heart,  
 “ and the answer of the tongue, are from God,  
 “ who gives wisdom to the wise, and knowledge  
 “ to those who know understanding; and when  
 “ it seems good to him, hides the things from  
 “ the wise and prudent, which he reveals to  
 “ babes. That he makes poor, and makes rich;  
 “ brings low, and lifts up. That riches and  
 “ honour come from him. That the race is not  
 “ to the swift, nor the battle to the strong; nor  
 “ bread to the wise, nor favour to men of skill;  
 “ but it is the hand of God, that has wrought all  
 “ these things. That though the horse be pre-  
 “ pared against the day of battle, safety is from  
 “ God. That he makes wars to cease, and sends  
 “ sword among the nations, at his pleasure.  
 “ That the wrath of man shall be made to work  
 “ out his praise, and the remainder shall be re-  
 “ strained. That when the lot is cast, the  
 “ the disposing of it is of God. That he works  
 “ all things according to the counsel of his own  
 “ will, and is accountable to no one.”

The truth of the doctrine of providence is  
 therefore established upon reason and revelation.

To

To proceed to another subject: The account we have in Scripture of our species in general suffering by the first offence of our grand parents, may seem at first view somewhat difficult to understand; as if it were a hardship that we should be in any respect losers by what we are innocent of. That we should be in danger of being condemned to any future or final punishment upon any account, but our own personal voluntary guilt, is contrary to the whole tenor of Scripture, and would indeed render revelation, as well as reason, wholly useless for directing us to the means of working out our own salvation, and avoiding destruction. That perfect justice should determine one person to final destruction for what was done by another, many ages before his birth, at once overturns all our notions of right and wrong. And if we cannot judge of right and wrong, we cannot be expected, nor should ever have been commanded, to forsake the error of our ways, and do that which is lawful and right. So that this opinion grossly misrepresents the character of the Judge of the world, and subverts religion, natural and revealed, from the foundation. But that the natural, as well as judicial effect of the first violation of Divine authority, followed by innumerable succeeding transgressions, might be the sinking of the species some degrees lower; the subjecting them, and the world they inhabit, to visible marks of Divine displeasure; and their being, upon the whole

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whole, of course, in a situation less promising for universal virtue and happiness; may be reasonable enough to suppose, and may be found to have been intended for valuable moral purposes. For, as the case of our species is, that they have continued disobedient ever since the first offence, it is but reasonable, that they be exposed to sufferings and afflictions. And as the natural tendency of affliction is reformation, and every instance of our world's being in a ruined state, and under a curse, ought to furnish a memorial of the great evil of vice; on these considerations, the present state of the world is evidently an effect of the Divine goodness, as well as severity. If man is sunk below the station, in which the species were first placed, he has no room for complaint: for he might have been placed there at his creation. If our condition seems less promising for virtue and happiness, than that in which the first of the species were at their creation placed; it is on the other hand to be remembered, that revelation shews, very great things have been done for us, more than sufficient to make up for what seeming disadvantages we may labour under. And thus all ground of complaint is effectually precluded.

The Scripture account of the destruction of mankind by a general deluge, is a subject which deserves to be briefly considered.

Though it is not to be positively affirmed, that this, or the other, was the true cause of a particular

particular supernatural phænomenon, or the method in which it was brought about; we may yet conclude in general, that it is more suitable to the ways of God, to bring about all effects, as well natural, as those we call supernatural, or miraculous, by certain adequate means, and, as far as possible, consistently with the stated laws and course of nature. That a mighty wind should, according to the Scripture account, separate the *Red-sea* for the passage of the people of *Israel*, was as proper a miracle wrought in their favour, as if the immediate word or will of God had done it. And if the general deluge was brought on by some pre-established natural means, it was no less a Divine judgment upon a race of creatures, whose wickedness was foreseen, than if it had been caused by the immediate exertion of Omnipotence. What constitutes a particular wonderful event a proper miracle, in a theological sense, is, its being expressly appealed to by some person, as a confirmation of a new pretended doctrine or mission from heaven. The general deluge was accordingly foretold, and the people of those antient times forwarned of it by *Noah*, but in vain. Should a person, pretending to a Divine mission, foretel an earthquake some months or years before, and an earthquake should happen exactly at the threatened time, all reasonable men would yield that measure of assent to his assertions and pretensions, which might be thought justly due to the authority of  
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one single miracle, taken in conjunction with the other circumstances of his own character, and that of his doctrine. Yet earthquakes are effects of natural causes. And if any person thinks it disparages the miracle of the flood to say, that it was brought about by the instrumentality of an intervening cause, the objection is the same, taking it for an immediate effect of Divine power. For the end being the destruction of a race of degenerate mortals, it may as well be said, Why were they not all struck dead in a moment by a word from the mouth of God, without the instrumentality of the suffocating element of water? as, Why was the flood brought on by means of any intervening cause? No one doubts, whether the old world was destroyed by God, as an exemplary punishment for their wickedness. Why should any one think it less a Divine judgment, for its being brought about in a consistency with the regular and uniform procedure of nature, than if it had been an effect quite detached from, and unconnected with the universal scheme; which is not so beautiful, so masterly, nor so worthy of an universal Governor.

Since the decision of the question of the cause of the tides, which puzzled all antiquity, and has been shewn by our incomparable philosopher to be the effect of the mutual gravitation of the earth and moon; it is very easily conceivable, that a nearer approach of the moon toward our

earth, by a third part of her whole distance, would cause an enormously high tide. If therefore we suppose the moon, or any other celestial body, to approach very near to the earth, the effect must be such a tide, as would rise higher than the highest lands, and, rolling round the globe, would wash down all terrestrial creatures into the deep, where they must perish. As we know that comets, from time to time, come from all parts of the heavens, and enter into the planetary regions; it is no unnatural supposition, to imagine that a comet, passing near the earth at the time of the deluge, might have been the appointed instrument of the Divine vengeance, by producing, by means of attraction, a disruption of the outward shell of this earth, under which it is probable a great collection of waters was lodged; which being by attraction raised into an excessive tide, must occasion the immersion and destruction of all land animals. And which might in great part be afterwards absorbed into vast empty caverns in the earth, which might by the same means be opened for its reception, and thus the present dry land left. The Scripture account, of the “breaking up of the fountains of the great deep,” seems to countenance this notion; which whoever would examine thoroughly, may read *Wibston’s Theory of the Earth*. That it is made very probable in that work, that a comet did pass near the annual path of the earth about the time of the general deluge, is acknowledged

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knowledge by the most judicious astronomers. That, upon every theory, the account of the flood is attended with difficulties, must likewise be confessed. But I think it a satisfaction, that upon the supposition of its being brought about by a comet, the possibility of it is fairly made out, and even a sort of analogy to the common course of nature, in the tides, which at times rise to such heights as to produce partial deluges.

However the flood was brought about, there are too many visible and unquestionable marks of a general disruption of the outside of this our planet, in the hideous mountains, mishapen rocks, hollow vales, and other ruinous appearances, with quantities of sea-shells, bones of animals, and large trees, found at a great depth in the earth; there are, I say, too many marks of a general concussion and ruin over the whole face of the earth, to leave any room to doubt that it has undergone some very great and universal change; which we have all the reason in the world to conclude, was no other than that of the general deluge, which, as it is described in Scripture, seems fit to have produced exactly the effects we observe.

It is true, that telescopes discover, on the face of the moon, and the planet *Venus*, irregularities and roughnesses, which make an appearance somewhat like to those, which we may suppose might be observed from the moon upon the face of our earth. But we cannot be certain,  
that

that those inequalities have not been part of the original make of those bodies; unless we could examine them, as we can those of our own planet. So that what we observe of this sort upon those bodies does in no degree affect what has been said with respect to the probability that a general deluge was the cause of the visibly ruinous state of our earth; for we cannot be sure, that the inequalities on the face of the Moon and *Venus* are of the same ruinous kind with those of our world. The Moon especially differs from our planet in two essential particulars. For it is certain beyond all doubt, that she has neither sea, at least on the face which is always towards us, nor atmosphere of air. So that we cannot reason on any minute circumstances from one to the other; but may judge of what we find in our own world, the state of which seems perfectly to answer to what might have been expected to be produced by such a deluge as *Moses* describes.

One particular, with regard to the flood, is too remarkable to be omitted. We have in the book of *Genesis* an exact account of the measures of the ark in cubits. In the time of *Moses*, it is not to be supposed, that the world was so well known, or natural history carried such a length, that the variety of different species of terrestrial animals should be guessed at to any nearness. So that it was to be expected, the measures of the ark should be taken either too small or too large, if the calculation of the room necessary for lodging



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ing seven of every clean species, and two of every one of the others, had been taken according to mere human knowledge, or conjecture. Instead of which, it is found by calculations made in our times, when it is, by means of our extensive commerce over the world, known, how many different species of terrestrial animals there are in all different climes and countries; that the measures we have of the ark would have afforded just sufficient room for all the creatures to be stowed in it, and one year's provision. No human sagacity could, in those early times, in which there was so little intercourse among the inhabitants of different countries, have guessed at the true number of different species of land animals in all the various climates of the world, every one of which almost has its peculiar sett. It is therefore evident, that the size and capacity of the ark was ordered by Divine appointment. For a human architect would undoubtedly have given its measures too large or too small.

There being somewhat seemingly difficult in the Scripture account of those degenerate beings, the fallen angels, it may be proper to throw together a few thoughts on that head.

Whether the angelic species were, at the time of their fall, in a first stage of trial, such as that in which we are at present, or whether they had gone through their first state of discipline, and deviated afterwards, as it seems inconsistent with the nature of finite moral agents to suppose them

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in any state out of all danger, or possibility of deviation; whatever particular state, I say, they were at that time in, the possibility of their degenerating into disobedience may be accounted for in a way comprehensible by us; though we cannot be sure, that we have the true and full account of that whole matter. The most probable account of the transgression and degeneracy of those once illustrious beings, may be, That they disallowed of the just pretensions of the *Messiah* to be the general Governor of their whole order; as the perverse *Jews* afterwards rejected him, when he came in the flesh. To suppose that the angels, now fallen, were capable of resolutely and deliberately opposing themselves, to Omnipotence, or raising rebellion against God, *as God*, is absurd. But it is no way inconceivable, that they might at first question the *Messiah's* pretensions to authority over them, which might, for any thing we know, be disputable, as his mission appeared to some even of the sincere, though not sufficiently considerate, *Jews*. In consequence of this, we can easily enough conceive the possibility of their being misled, by pride, by example, and persuasion of *Satan*, the leader of the adverse party, who probably himself had aspired to a superiority over his fellow-beings, and could not brook a rival. As to the difficulty of supposing a set of beings, of such superior wisdom as we commonly suppose they possessed, capable of error; Scripture itself expressly affirms, that the

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angels are chargeable with folly. Besides, we pronounce rashly, when we pretend to assert, that the angels were at the time of their fall greatly superior to the most knowing of our species. We find indeed those who kept their integrity, spoke of in Scripture as raised to very high degrees of elevation. But nothing can from thence be argued with respect to those who fell many ages before, when perhaps they might not be risen to any such degree of perfection as the good part of that species now enjoy, which may be the reward of their virtue and fidelity. Besides, supposing those beings to have fallen from a state of happiness, to which they were raised in consequence of their having with success passed through one stage of trial or discipline, we know not whether one stage of discipline was all that was allotted them. We know not but they were to pass through two, or more, as one properly speaking seems appointed for us, though, as observed before, no state of freedom can be wholly secure from all possibility of deviation, but only more and more so, according to the increasing experience, longer habitude, and greater wisdom of moral agents. We know not, but the angelic species were raised to the happiness, from which they fell, in consequence of their going through a more advantageous and easy first stage of probation, than what is appointed us; and that, to balance that advantage, the happiness they were raised to was more precarious

ous than that which is destined for those of our species, who shall acquit themselves with honour of a more difficult one. This seems no more than equitable, and natural, that the consequence of an easier state of trial passed through with success should be a lower degree, and more precarious kind, of happiness; and of a more difficult one, a higher and more certain kind of happiness. And besides, it is very probably the nature of all moral agents to value most, and be most afraid of losing, what has cost them the greatest pains to attain, and what only a few have attained. However it be, there is plainly no absurdity in the Scripture account of the fall of a certain number of beings, of a rank prior in existence, and superior in dignity, to ours; nor of their being driven, by a total despair of recovery to the Divine favour, to a confirmed habit of perseverance in vice, and opposition to all good; which, increasing, must increase their punishment, and multiply their damnation. That those desperate beings, who know themselves to be sealed to destruction, should, as far as permitted, exercise an implacable envy and hatred against our species, of whom they foresee that some part will rise to that happiness, from which they are irrecoverably fallen, is not to be wondered at. A *Nero*, a *Duke d'Alva*, a bloody father inquisitor\*; are not these dæmons? If we

\* See Page 65.

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have such diabolical beings in our own species, who have had so short a time to improve in wickedness, and are still under a dispensation of heavenly grace; why should we wonder at any accounts we have in Scripture of the confirmed wickedness of spirits abandoned to despair, and who have had many thousands of years to improve and harden themselves in vice.

Some have made a difficulty of the incarnation of *Christ*; as if there were in that doctrine somewhat peculiarly hard to admit, or next to absurd. But in such cases, where nothing is required to be granted, but what is analogous to the course of nature; it does not seem reasonable to hesitate at any supposed difficulty, which, if removed, would leave another confessedly as hard to surmount. How a spiritual being, of any rank whatever, comes to be immured in a material vehicle, is to us wholly inconceivable. The incarnation of a human soul is a mystery utterly inexplicable by human sagacity. Nor is it at all more incomprehensible, how an angel, or archangel, should animate a body, than how a human mind should. The difficulty does not arise from the rank, or dignity, of the spiritual being; but from the nature of spirits in general; whose power of animating and actuating a material vehicle, and the *nexus*, which forms the union between two natures so different, are to us wholly inconceivable.

And

And as to the objection, Of its being improbable, that a being of such dignity, as that of the *Messiah*, should condescend to assume, for a time, the lowest station of rational nature; it will presently vanish, on considering the importance of the purpose, for which he did so. For if, in consequence of this amazing condescension, there should, in a consistence with the Divine rectitude, and established order of the moral world, and the freedom of the creature, many thousands, perhaps millions, of our species, be raised hereafter by degrees to such greatness and goodness, that the present station of the archangel *Gabriel* will be regarded by them as an inferior one (which will certainly one day be the case) who can think any apparatus, to gain such an end, too costly, or operose? Whoever duly considers the stupendous excellence of a nature, which, however mean and low at present, is yet formed capable of an endless progression in every noble quality; will not think any contrivance ill bestowed, or any condescension too low, to gain the moral improvement of such a species. Add, that condescension on a proper occasion, and for some important end, is suitable to a superior nature; and peculiarly agreeable to every great mind. And let the consideration of the high exaltations of the *Messiah*, in consequence of his gracious interposition for the recovery of a ruined species, be taken in. Add likewise the divine pleasure of exerting a benevolence so extensive, that an eter-

nity will be employed by a race of beings, delivered by it from utter destruction, in celebrating its praises, and expressing that gratitude, which every succeeding period of their happy existence will heighten, every new enjoyment will inflame with ever-growing raptures.

To pretend to dispute whether it was possible for mankind to be restored by any other means, than those which infinite Wisdom has chosen, is both presumptuous, and useless. It is our wisdom to consider what we have to do, as the moral constitution of things is; not to amuse ourselves with vain speculations upon what could do us no service to know, and what it is impossible we should by our own sagacity ever discover. In general, it is evident, that the repentance and reformation of offenders was not of itself, without some additional apparatus, sufficient, consistently with the Divine scheme, to restore a guilty order of beings to a capacity of being received to pardon. For divine wisdom never uses a more operose method of proceeding, when one less so will answer the end.

Whether we shall at all, in the present state, be able to determine wherein the principal propriety, or necessity of the death of *Christ* consisted, and how it came to be efficacious for our restoration to the Divine favour, is greatly to be questioned; as Scripture has only declared to us the fact, that it is chiefly by his laying down his life for mankind, which was the great end of his  
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coming into the world, that we are to be received to pardon and mercy ; but has given us no precise account of the *modus* of the operation of his death for that purpose, nor how the ends of the Divine government were answered by it. In general, may it be said, That the consideration of so important a scheme found necessary for restoring an offending order of beings, is likely to strike all rational minds, who may ever come to the knowledge of it, with a very awful sense of the fatal evil of vice, which made it necessary. And as they must see the difficulty of finding such a mediator for themselves, in case of their offending ; they may thereby be the more effectually deterred from disobedience. It may impress them with high notions of the Divine purity, and aversion to evil, which made the restoration of offenders a work so difficult and expensive. And we know not how wide each particular in the moral scheme of the Divine government may extend. We are told in Scripture, that the angels desire to look into the mystery of our salvation. That some of them have actually fallen from their obedience is doubted by none who admit revelation. That there is any state of finite virtue and happiness so secure, as that it is impossible to fall from it, or that created beings can, consistently with freedom, be raised to any such state, as to defy weakness and error, and to be above all advantage from instruction by precept or example, is by no means to be affirmed.



firmed. And if there be no reason to doubt, but in all states, free agents are fallible (though more and more secure of continuing in their obedience, as more perfect) since according to Scripture even the angels are chargeable with folly; it may then be put as a conjecture, whether the scheme of the restoration of mankind may not have immensely extensive and valuable effects upon various orders of moral agents throughout the universe for preserving them in their obedience. This effect the consideration of it ought to have especially above all on us, who are most nearly interested in it; and we ought not to hope to escape, if we neglect so great salvation; and ought therefore, if we name the name of *Christ*, to resolve to depart from iniquity. It is also to be expected, that the consideration of what our everlasting happiness cost, should immensely enhance the value of it to those of our species who shall hereafter be found fit for it; especially with the additional consideration of the hideous ruin we shall have escaped, which is such, as to render it necessary for the Son of God to leave, for a season, his eternal glory, to descend to our lower world, and give himself to death, to deliver as many of us as would, from it. That our Saviour died a witness to the truth of his own mission and doctrine, as well as a sacrifice for the sins of mankind, is certain. But it is evident, that his death was very different, both in intention and consequences, from those of the martyrs. That his death

was also a glorious instance of obedience, and a noble example for our imitation, and that of all rational agents, is also to be taken in, and heightens the grandeur of the scheme. A consequence from the obedience and death of *Christ*, mentioned in Scripture, and hinted above, is his being “highly exalted, and receiving a name “above every name in heaven and earth, to the “glory of God the Father.” Of which likewise we can see the propriety and justice. And Scripture also countenances the opinion, That the high exaltation of such a number of mankind, as shall be found capable of it, is given him as a reward for his sufferings.

However none of these considerations, nor all of them together, come up to the point in question, viz. What connexion in the nature of things there is between the death of *Christ* and the salvation of mankind. This will probably be a *desideratum* as long as the present state lasts.

To expect, that we should be informed of the Divine oeconomy with the same distinctness as of our own duty, would be a piece of arrogance above ordinary. It is by experience we are instructed in temporals, as well as spirituals; and we proceed according to it, and are successful in the affairs of life, while we know little or nothing of the means by which the Divine wisdom acts in the natural world, and ought in all reason to expect to know still less of his scheme in a supernatural interposition, as the plan of our redemption

redemption may be called. Did we know, which probably it is not proper we should, more of the foundations and connections of the various parts of that sublime scheme, we should then know nothing useful to us, but our duty. That we know now; and with such clearness, as will render us wholly inexcusable, if we be not found in the full and faithful performance of it.

The doctrine of the future resurrection of the body may, as properly as any one, be said to be peculiar to revelation. For there is no reason to think, that even the more civilized heathen nations had generally any notion of it. On the contrary, we find the enlightened *Athenians*, in the apostolic times, startled at it, as altogether new to them. But, to use the words of the great apostle of the *Gentiles* to his hearers, "Why should it be thought a thing incredible, that God should raise the dead?" To give life and being at first to what was once nothing, is certainly at least as difficult, as to restore a bodily vehicle from a state of corruption, and to re-unite to it the mind, which had still preserved its existence during the state of separation. And the same omnipotence, which was equal to the former, may be fairly concluded equal to the latter. The precise *modus*, in which this re-union of the material and spiritual parts of the human nature at the resurrection, will be executed, is to us, as well as innumerable other effects of the Divine power, wholly unknown. The following hypothesis,

thesis, or conjecture, (the author of which I cannot recollect) has been thought ingenious. That there may be originally disposed, in the structure of the human frame, a system of *stamina*, in miniature, of the future aerial or ætherial resurrection-body, so enveloped, or wrapt up, as to continue incorruptible, till the consummation of all things; at which time, by a pre-established law of nature, it may unfold itself, in a manner analogous to conception, or vegetation, and the soul being re-united to it, the perfect man may again appear, renewed in his nature and state, and yet in general the same compound being he is at present, consisting of soul and body, or, perhaps more properly, of body, soul, and spirit. The apostle *Paul's* comparison of the death and burial of the body, to the sowing of a grain of wheat; and the resurrection of the future body, to the springing up of the stalk, which we know to be nothing else, than the unfolding of the minute *stamina* originally disposed in the grain sown; gives countenance to this conjecture, and probably furnished the first hint of it. It is not my purpose to establish any one hypothesis whatever. The only end answered by mentioning a conjecture for solving this difficulty, if it be a difficulty, is to shew the doctrine of a future resurrection to be conceivable, without any absurdity. It must even be owned, that the scheme of a restoration, or renovation, of the whole human nature is incomparably more beautiful and regular, and consequently

quently more likely to be the true one, than that received by the heathen world, which supposed the total loss or destruction of one essential part of the nature, I mean the body; and made the future man a quite different being, an unbodied spirit, instead of an embodied one. Whereas the Christian scheme represents the dissolution and separation of the body for a time as the effect and punishment of vice; and its restoration as the effect of the kind interposition of our glorious Deliverer; by which means the whole existence of the human species (I mean, of that part of them, which shall be found fit for life and immortality) appears uniform and of a piece; and after the conclusion of the separate state, goes on as before, only with the advantage of being incomparably more perfect, though still the same in kind.

The views held forth in Scripture of the future restoration, glory and happiness, of the peculiar people of God; of the universal establishment of the most pure and perfect of religions; of the *millennium*, or paradise restored, with the general prevalency of virtue and goodness; by which means a very great proportion of those, who shall live in that period, will come to happiness; all these views are sublime, worthy of the Divine revelation, which exhibits them, and suitable to the greatness of the moral oeconomy. But, as the future parts of prophecy are, and ought

ought to be, difficult to understand in all their minute particulars, as is evident from the diversity of opinions given by the commentators on those parts of holy writ; while they generally agree, that the above-mentioned particulars are in Scripture held forth as to be hereafter accomplished; as this, I say, is the case, it may not be necessary, that I attempt to fix any one particular scheme of the completion of those parts of prophecy.

The doctrine of a future general judgment of the whole human race, by the same Divine person, who, by the power of the Father, made the world, and who redeemed it; is held forth in Scripture in a manner suitable to the pomp, with which so awful a scene may be expected to be transacted. That the whole Divine oeconomy, with respect to this world, should conclude with a general enquiry into, and public declaration of, the character, and so much of the past conduct, as may be necessary, of every individual of the species; and that, in consequence of the different behaviour of each, during the state of discipline and probation, their future existence should be happy, or miserable; that every individual should be disposed of according to what he has made himself fit for; all this the perfect rectitude of the Divine nature indispensably requires. And without this conclusion of the whole oeconomy, the moral government of the world must be imperfect; or rather, without it, the very idea of  
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moral government is absurd. That the decision of the future state of men will turn chiefly upon their general prevailing characters; the habits they have acquired; the dispositions they have cultivated; their attachment to virtue and obedience, or to irregularity and vice; seems probable both from Scripture and reason. So that, as, on one hand, a few errors, if not persisted in, but repented of, and reformed, being consistent with a prevailing good character, may be overlooked; so, on the other, a thousand acts of charity, or virtue of any kind, if done from indirect views, or by persons of hypocritical or bad hearts, will gain no favour from the general Judge. Of what consequence is it then, that we be sure of our own integrity! And how dreadful may the effects prove of going out of the present state of discipline, with one vicious habit uncorrected, or with a temper of mind defective in respect of one virtue!

Whether all the more secret errors of persons of good characters, of which they have sincerely repented, which they have for years lamented with floods of undissembled tears, and which they have thoroughly reformed; will be displayed to the full view of men and angels; seems a questionable point. For, it does not to reason appear absolutely necessary. It being easily enough conceivable, that the character of a person may be determinable by Divine Wisdom, and capable of being set forth to the general view in  
a manner

a manner sufficiently satisfactory, without so minute an examination. And, if so, it may be concluded, that the sincere penitent will be put to no needless pain. And if there is a pain more cruel than another, it is, for a generous mind to be exposed to public shame. Besides what reason may suggest on this head, the numerous expressions of Scripture, of “ blotting out the sins of “ penitents from the books of remembrance, of “ hiding, covering, and forgetting them,” and the like, seem to favour the opinion, that the character and conduct of penitents will be only so far displayed, as to shew them to be fit objects of the Divine mercy.

## S E C T. IV.

*Considerations on the Credibility of Scripture.*

**I**T is not only to the studious and learned, that the proofs of revelation lie level. All men, who will apply their faculties with the same diligence and attention which they every day bestow upon the common affairs, and even the amusements, of life, may be rationally convinced, that they are under Divine government, and must feel, that they are accountable creatures; upon which fundamental principles the whole scheme of revelation being constructed, they may easily bring themselves to see the force of the evidence arising from miracles and the completion of prophecy, particularly those relating to the *Jewish* people;



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people; which, in conjunction with the character of *Moses* and the Prophets, of *Christ*, and his Apostles; a due attention to the nature and tendency of the doctrines, and precepts contained in Scripture; and the consideration of the establishment of Christianity, so wholly unaccountable upon any other foot, than its being from God; may give full and well-grounded satisfaction to any considerate person, that all the objections of the opposers of revealed religion can never amount to such a degree of weight in the whole, as to over-balance the positive proof for it, or yield a sufficient proof that the whole is a forgery.

At the same time it must be observed, that to be qualified for examining in a proper manner all the various arguments in favour of revelation, requires a very extensive knowledge in various ways, as in philological and critical learning, history, and philology, natural and moral. Which shews in a very strange light the presumption of many men of superficial and narrow improvements, who pretend to oppose religion, and rashly enter into a dispute for which they are so ill furnished.

For it is the unfair and fallacious proceeding of many disingenuous opposers of revealed religion, to detach some single branch of proof, or some doubtful argument. and by cavilling at that, endeavour to overturn the whole evidence for revelation. But whoever will consider the subject  
with

with candor, will see, that it is of such an extensive nature, comprehends so many different views, and is established upon such a variety of arguments, drawn from different parts of knowledge, that the true state, and full result, of the evidence, upon the whole, cannot, by the nature of the thing, be reduced to one point; and consequently, that taking any one narrow view of it, and judging from that, is the way to deceive ourselves and others. It is indeed as if a man were rashly to pronounce, that the earth is of no regular figure whatever, merely from observing the irregularity of the *Alps*, and other ranges of mountains, which fill the eye of the traveller, while the whole globe is too large, and too near, for the human sight to comprehend its general figure. Yet the very first principles of geography shew, that the protuberance of the highest mountain of the world, being but three miles perpendicular, is no greater irregularity upon a globe eight thousand miles in diameter, than the little roughnesses upon an orange are derogations from the general roundness of its figure; as a mite, or other very small insect, might be supposed to imagine them.

To consider any complex subject in a partial manner, exclusive of any material part, and without taking in the whole of it, is not considering it as it is; and subjects will not be understood otherwise than as they are. Men of narrow minds may run themselves, and designing

men others, into endless labyrinths, and inextricable errors: but truth stands upon its own eternal and immoveable basis; and wisdom will in the end be justified of her children.

The whole evidence of revelation is not prophecy alone, nor miracles alone, nor the sublimity of its doctrines alone, nor the purity of its precepts alone, nor the characters of *Moses* and the prophets, *Christ*, and his apostles alone, nor the internal character of simplicity in the writings of Scripture alone; nor any one of the other branches of proof alone; but the joint coincidence and accumulated effect of them all concentrated. Now he who can bring himself to belief seriously, that such a number of amazing coincidences, such a variety of evidence, presumptive and positive, circumstantial and essential, collateral and direct, internal and external, should by the Divine providence be suffered to concur, to the effectual and remediless deception of the most inquisitive, judicious, and ingenuous part of mankind, must have strange notions of the Divine oeconomy in the moral world. And he, who, in spite of the super-abundant and accumulated evidence for the truth of revelation, will suffer himself to be misled into opposition against it, merely on the account of some single circumstantial difficulty, must have no head for judging of complicated evidence; which yet every man has occasion to weigh, and to act upon almost every day of his life. And he, who, from indirect views of any kind, labours to  
mislead

mislead mankind into opposition against what would be infinitely to their advantage to receive, is the common enemy of truth, and of mankind.

If the sacred history of Scripture has not the internal marks of truth, there is no reason to give credit to any history in the world. And to question the veracity of antient history in the gross, would be (to mention no other absurd consequences) doubting whether there were any men of integrity in the world, till these four or five centuries last past. The remarkable co-incidence betwixt sacred and profane history shews the genuineness of the former; and its delivering grave and credible accounts of things, while many of the antient writers amuse us with fables evidently drawn from imperfect accounts of the sacred story, plainly discover Scripture to have been the original from which the other is an imperfect copy. Of the foundation and measure of certainty attainable by testimony, I have treated elsewhere\*.

The fragments of antient *Phœnician* historians preserved by *Eusebius*; with what we have of *Zeno*, the *Egyptian* writers, whose opinions and accounts of things are preserved by *Diogenes Laertius*, *Diodorus Siculus*, and others; the fragments we have ascribed to *Linus*, *Orpheus*, *Epicharmus*; The remains of *Sanchoniathon*, *Berosus*, *Manetho*, *Philo Byblius*, *Euryfusus* the *Pythagorean*, *Hipparchus*, *Amelius* the *Platonist*, *Heraclitus*, *Timæus*, *Chalcidi-*

\* See above, p. 15.

*cus* (who writes of *Moses*), *Homer*, *Hesiod*, *Callimachus*, *Aristophanes*, *Plato*, *Cicero*, *Ovid*, all these in what they say of the creation, agree in the main with *Moses's* account of it. *Homer*, *Hesiod*, *Callimachus*, *Aristobulus*, *Theophilus* of *Antioch*, *Lucian*, *Dion Cassius*, *Suetonius*, *Josephus*, *Philo*, *Tibullus*, mention, or allude to, the universal custom of resting every seventh day. The *Egyptian* writers, *Plato*, *Strabo*, *Ovid*, *Virgil*, and others, mention the state of innocence, and the Fall. *Philo Byblius*, from *Sanchoniathon*, and *Plutarch*, shew, that several particulars of the Fall were received by the most antient heathens. *Ferdinand Mendefius* testifies, that many particulars relating to *Adam*, *Eve*, the forbidden tree, and the serpent, are to be found among the natives of *Peru*, and the *Philippine* islands. And the name of *Adam* is known among the *Indian Brachmans*, which word has been by some thought to have been a corruption of *Abrabamans*; and it has been thought probable that the religion of *Zoroastres* and the *Magi* is derived from that patriarch. The truth of *Moses's* account of the flood is attested by *Berosus*, *Diodorus*, *Varro*, *Pliny*, *Plutarch*, *Lucian*, *Molo*, *Nicolaus Damascenus*, and others; some of whom mention the name of *Noah*, the ark, and the dove. *Josephus Acosta*, and *Antonio Herrera* affirm, that at *Cuba*, *Mechoana*, *Nicaragua*, and other parts of *America*, the memory of the flood, and the ark, are preserved, and were found, with several other doctrines, of mere revelation,

upon the first discoveries of those places by the *Europeans*. But to proceed, *Berosus*, *Manetho*, *Hesiod*, *Nicolaus Damascenus*, and others, mention the age of the first men to have been almost a thousand years. *Plutarch*, *Maximus Tyrius*, *Catullus*, and others, speak of an intercourse between God and men in antient times. *Porphyry*, *Jamblichus*, and others, speak of angels. The history of the tower of *Babel*, under the poetical disguise of the giants to scale heaven, is found in *Homer*, *Virgil*, *Horace*, *Ovid*, *Lucan*, and the *Sibylline* oracle quoted by *Josephus*. *Diodorus Siculus*, *Strabo*, *Tacitus*, *Pliny*, and *Solinus*, mention the destruction of *Sodom* and *Gomorrha*. The history of *Abraham* and other patriarchs, agreeable to the writings of *Moses*, is found in *Philo Byblius* from *Sanchoniathon*, and in *Berosus*, *Hecateus*, *Damascenus*, *Artapanus*, *Eupolemus*, *Demetrius*, and *Justin* from *Trogus Pompeius*, who also gives *Joseph's* history agreeable to Scripture. By several of these the principal acts of *Moses* are related. Of whom mention is also made by *Manetho*, *Lyfimachus*, *Chæremón*, *Diodorus Siculus*, *Longinus*, *Strabo*, *Pliny*, and *Tacitus*. *Diodorus* speaks of the drying up of the *Red sea*. *Herodotus*, *Diodorus*, *Strabo*, *Philo Byblius*, *Aristophanes*, *Tacitus*, *Horace*, and *Juvenal*, mention the ceremony of circumcision. *Eusebius* tells us, that a book was written by *Eupolemus* on *Elijah's* miracles. The history of *Jonah* is in *Lycophron* and *Æneas Gæzus*. *Julian* the apostate owns that there were inspired men

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among the *Jews*. *Menander* mentions the great drought in the time of *Elijab*. The histories of *David* and *Solomon* are given in a pretty full manner in the remains of the *Phœnician Annals*, and *Damascenus's* history, in *Eupolemus*, and *Dius's Phœnician* history, who speaks of riddles, or hard questions, sent betwixt *Solomon* and *Hiram*; of which also *Menander* the *Ephesian* historian, *Alexander Polyhistor*, and others, give an account. *Hazael*, king of *Syria*, is mentioned by *Justin*. *Menander* the historian mentions *Salmanasar*, who carried the *Israëlites*, or ten tribes, into that captivity, from which they are not yet returned. The name and expeditions of *Sennacherib* king of *Assyria*, are found in *Berosus's Chaldaics*, and *Herodotus's* history, which last relates the destruction of his vast army (2 *Kings* xvii.) with a mixture of fable. *Suetonius*, *Tacitus*, *Pliny* the younger, and *Numenius* testify, that there was such a person as *Jesus Christ*. His miracles are owned by *Celsus*, *Julian* the apostate, and the *Jewish* writers, who oppose Christianity. *Porphyry*, though an enemy to the Christian religion, says, “after *Christ* was worshipped, no one received any benefit from the gods.” *Suetonius*, *Tacitus*, *Pliny*, *Julian* the apostate, and the *Jewish* writers, mention his being put to death. And *Tacitus* affirms that many were put to death for their adherence to his religion. A very particular and favourable account of the character and behaviour of the first Christians is given by *Pliny*,

*Pliny*, in a letter to the emperor *Trajan*, still extant. *Pblegon*, in his *Annals*, mentions the miracles of St. *Peter*. And St. *Paul* is celebrated in a fragment of *Longinus* among eminent orators. The history of our Saviour's life, death, resurrection, and ascension, was declared by the apostles in the face of his enemies, and in the very country, where he lived, died, and rose again. They wrote their accounts in *Greek*, which was universally understood, and related the things, as they passed a very few years before, and which must have been fresh in every body's memory. The name of *Jesus* must have been entered in the public tables, or registers, at his birth. To which accordingly *Justin Martyr* and *Tertullian* appeal. And the account of his death and resurrection must, according to the custom, when any thing remarkable happened in any of the provinces of the empire, have been sent to the court of *Rome*. The memory of the slaughter of the innocents is preserved by *Augustus's* remark on *Herod's* cruelty. The miraculous darkness at our Saviour's crucifixion (which was undoubtedly supernatural; it being impossible that the sun should be eclipsed by the moon which was then in opposition) is affirmed by *Tertullian* to have been upon record in his time in the public registers. Our Saviour is several times mentioned by *Josephus*; though not in such a manner as so extraordinary a character deserved. But nothing is more common than such unexpected neglects in historians. Be-



sides, it is probable that *Josepbus* might be under some constraint in touching on the subject of *Christ* and his religion; as he makes honourable mention of *John Baptist*, and of *James* the brother of *Jesus*; to whose murder he ascribes the destruction of *Jerusalem*.

Such public passages as the dumbness inflicted on *Zacharias*, while the people were waiting without the temple; of the wise men from the east; of the murder of the innocents; of our Saviour's driving some hundreds, probably, of people out of the outer court of the temple, immediately after his triumph, which must have alarmed the whole city; the prodigies at his death; the dreadful end of *Judas Iscariot*; the names of the Roman emperor, and governor, of *Herod*, of the high priest, of *Nicodemus*, of *Josepb* of *Arimathea*, of *Gamaliel*, *Dionysius* the *Areopagite*, *Sergius Paulus*, *Simon Magus*, *Felix*, King *Agrippa*, *Tertullus*, *Galio*, and many other persons of the highest rank mentioned with great freedom, shew, that the historians were under no apprehension of being detected; and, at the same time, establish the genuineness of the New Testament history by chronological and geographical evidences. Nor would any set of impostors have overloaded their scheme with such a number of circumstances no way necessary to it, for fear of committing some blunder, which might have detected them. The miraculous power of inflicting death upon offenders, as in the case of *Ananias* and *Sapphira*, and blindness

blindness in that of *Elymas*, was not a thing to be boasted of, if it had not been true; because of the danger of being called to account by the civil magistrate. And that the New Testament history is not a forgery of latter times, is much better established, than that the *Æneid*, the *Metamorphosis*, and *Horace's* works, were writ in the *Augustan* age. For none of them was authenticated by whole churches, nor are they cited by multitudes of authors cotemporary with them, as the apostolical writings are by *Barnabas*, *Clemens*, *Romanus*, *Ignatius*, *Polycarp*, and the rest, and acknowledged to be the genuine works of the authors, whose names they bear, by enemies, as *Trypho*, *Julian* the Apostate, and others of the earliest ages, and authenticated by succeeding writers through every following period. The numerous antient apologists for Christianity, in their addresses to the emperors, confirm the particulars of the New Testament history by their appeals to records then extant, and persons then living. And history shews, that those appeals were so convincing as to gain the Christians from time to time favour and mercy from the emperors.

That the Mosaic history of the patriarchs, and their posterity the *Jews* and *Israelites*, is genuine, is in a manner visible at this day from the present circumstances of that part of them, who are distinguished from all other people, I mean the *Jews*, or the posterity of the two tribes: for those of the ten are, according to the predictions of  
prophecy,

prophecy, at present undistinguished, though hereafter to be restored with their brethren the *Jews* to their own land. There is no such minute and circumstantial proof, that the *Italians* are the descendants of the ancient *Romans*, or the *French* of the *Gauls*.

It is to be observed, that the miraculous and supernatural parts of the sacred story depend on the very same authority as the common, and are accordingly related in the same manner; and the whole hangs so together, and rests on the same foundation, that they must either be both true, or both false. But no one ever imagined the latter to be the case.

The simplicity of the Scripture accounts of the most striking and amazing events any where related, their being described in the same artless and unaffected manner as the common occurrences of the history, is at least a very strong presumption, that the relators had no design of any kind, but to give a true representation of facts. Had *Moses*, the most antient of historians, had any design to impose upon mankind, could he, in his account of the creation, the flood, the destruction of *Sodom* and *Gomorrha* by fire from heaven, of the escape of the *Israelitish* people from *Egyptian* tyranny, and their passage through the wilderness under his own conduct (a retreat more remarkable than that of the ten thousand under *Xenophon*, which makes such a figure in history) could the relator of these amazing events have avoided

avoided expatiating and flourishing upon such astonishing scenes, had they been mere invention? Would the fabulous writer of a sett of adventures, of which himself was the fictitious hero, have spoke of himself with the modesty which appears in the Mosaic history? Would he have represented himself as capable of timidity, diffidence, or passion? Would he have immortalised his own weaknesses? Had the inventor of the scripture account of *Abraham*, and his posterity, intended his fictitious history as an encomium upon that people, as *Virgil* did his *Æneid* on his countrymen, would he have represented them as a perverse, disobedient people, so often under the displeasure of their God; condemned to wander forty years and perish at last to the number of many thousands in the wilderness, to the seeming disparagement of the wisdom of their leader; ever deviating into the worship of idols, contrary to what might have been expected from the numerous miracles wrought in their favour by the true God, a circumstance very improper to be dwelt on, as being likely to bring the truth of those miracles into question with superficial readers?

Would the inventors of the New Testament history, supposing it a fiction, have given an account of such a series of miracles in the cool and unaffected manner they do, had they not been genuine? Could they have avoided some flights of fancy in describing such wonders, as  
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the feeding of thousands with almost nothing; the curing of diseases, calming of tempests, driving evil spirits from their holds, and calling the dead out of their graves, with a word? Could they have given an account of the barbarities inflicted on the most innocent and amiable of all characters, without working up their narration to the pitch of a tragedy?

Must not a man be out of his wits before he could think of writing a set of grave directions about the conduct of miraculous and supernatural gifts, as of speaking foreign languages, which the speakers had never learned; foretelling future events, and the like; must not a man be distracted, who, in our times, when no such miraculous gifts subsist, should write of them as common and unquestionable? This the apostle *Paul*, one of the most judicious writers of antiquity, sacred or profane, does in a variety of places; mentioning them incidentally and without going out of his way to prove the existence of them, and even depreciating them in comparison with moral virtues. What is to be concluded from hence, but that those miraculous gifts were at that time as notorious, and common, as perhaps the knowledge of mathematics, or any other science, is now among us?

Miracles being a very important part of the evidence for revelation, it is proper to consider a little that subject. And first, one would wonder, that ever it should have occurred to any person,  
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that the proof from miracles is a weak or suspicious one, supposing the miracles to be really such, and nothing inconsistent in the doctrine they are brought in proof of. For nothing seems more reasonable to expect, than that, if the Author of nature should choose to be likewise author of a revelation, he should shew his concern in the establishment or promulgation of such revelation, by exerting that power over nature, which we know he is possessed of, and for which we believe and adore him, as the Author of nature. Can any thing be more reasonable to expect, than that He, who first breathed into man the breath of life, should, in order to assure mankind, that a particular message comes from Him, give power to those he employs in carrying such message, to restore life to the dead; or than that He, who made the elements of the natural world, should authenticate his revealed laws by giving to those, whom he employs in promulgating them, a power over nature, a command of the elements of air and water; so that winds may cease to rage, and waves to roll at their word? There is indeed all the reason in the world to believe, that those very objectors against the propriety of miracles, as a proof of a revelation coming from God, would have found fault with Christianity, had there been no account of miracles in Scripture, as deficient in one very strong and convincing evidence of a Divine original.

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The proper definition of such a miracle as may be supposed to be worked by Divine authority for proof of a revelation from God, is, An immediate and extraordinary effect of power superior to all human; exhibited in presence of a competent number of credible witnesses, in such manner as to be subject to their deliberate examination; expressly declared to be intended for establishing a doctrine in itself reasonable, and useful for the improvement of mankind in virtue.

First, a proper miracle, in the theological sense, must be an immediate and extraordinary effect of power, exhibited expressly for the purpose. For the application of any of the constant and regular powers or properties of natural bodies, in however artful, or to common people inconceivable, a manner, is no miracle; else all the arts, especially chemistry, might be said to be systems of miracles. The pretended miracle of the liquefaction of the blood of saint *Januarius*, with which the priests in popish countries yearly delude the ignorant people, is no more than the natural effect of a certain liquor dropped upon a mass of a particular gummy, or resinous substance, which dissolves in a manner as little miraculous, as that of a lump of sugar, upon which water is dropped. But to proceed. The miraculous work performed must be the effect of a power *superior* to all *human*. It is not necessary, that it be superior to angelic power. Because  
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our best notions of the Divine oeconomy lead us to believe, that spiritual beings are the instruments of God for the advantage of mankind. So that while we believe this, to question a miracle performed by a good angel, would be insulting Heaven itself. And we may reasonably conclude from the tendency of the doctrine or laws to be established, whether the miracle is wrought by a good or evil being, according to our Saviour's reasoning; *Matth.* xii. 25. A miracle performed in confirmation of a doctrine tending to promote and establish virtue in the world, and to defeat the designs which evil beings may have against mankind, may reasonably be concluded to be wrought by the power, not of a fiend, but a good spirit, and contrariwise. For it is reasonable to expect a being to exert his power for the advancement of what is agreeable to his own character, and not for the contrary purpose.

Some miracles may be conceived not to be *clearly*, and *indisputably*, above all human power; and yet to be genuine miracles. Some of the works of *Moses* were such, that the *Egyptian* artists could imitate them in some manner, delusive indeed, and defective; but which rendered it at least disputable whether they were wholly above human power, or not. Nor is it necessary, that every divine mission be so authenticated as to put its genuineness beyond all *possible question*. It is enough, if, upon the whole, there be a considerable



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siderable overbalance of credibility. For, after all, direct revelations of all kinds, are ever to be considered as *exuberancies* of Divine goodness; as advantages *beyond* what rational agents, in most cases, have any ground to expect; and are therefore by no means to be thought deficient, if they want this or that evidence, and be not attended with all the circumstances of conviction which our fantastical imaginations could invent. The least and lowest degree of supernatural assistance is more than we had any reason to expect, or pretence to demand. And had we never been blest with any clear and extensive revelation, we should have been altogether without excuse in acting a wicked part, and stifling the light of natural conscience.

Others of the Scripture miracles, and those by far the most considerable part, are such as to be clearly and unquestionably above all human power. Of this sort are the dividing of the *Red* sea, the curing inveterate diseases with a word, and raising the dead.

A miracle ought (in order to its being received by those who were not eye-witnesses) to have been wrought in the presence of such a number of credible witnesses, as to render it unlikely that there should have been any delusion. Though it may be possible, that the senses of one or two persons may be deceived, it is not to be supposed, that those of any number should. And the greater the number of the witnesses is (supposing them

them credible) the probability of their being all at the same time under a delusion becomes the less, till it comes to be wholly incredible and inconceivable. And then their testimony becomes unquestionable. This necessary condition effectually excludes such pretended miracles as those of *Mabomet's* vision, which passed wholly *without witness*. For our Saviour's reasoning is undeniably just; *if a man bear record of himself, his record is not true*; that is, the mere assertion of a person, who, for any thing that appears, may be interested to deceive, is not a sufficient ground of credit. On this account also that most monstrous insult upon all the senses and faculties of mankind, Transubstantiation, is effectually cut off from all pretensions to the character of a miracle. For the wafer is so far from having been ever turned into a whole *Christ* before any credible witness, or witnesses; that every person, before whom it has been attempted or pretended to be done, has had, or might have had, the assurances of both sense and understanding, that it remained still as much wafer as ever.

The witnesses of a miracle must be credible. They must be under no visible temptation to deceive; and they must be persons of such understanding as to be equal to the examination of the pretended miracle. The pretended miracles of the papists may on very just grounds be suspected; as we know what immense profits that worldly church gets by deluding the people.

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The workers of the Scripture miracles were under no temptation to bribe witnesses, but quite to the contrary. For they all lost, and none of them gained any thing secular by their works. *Moses* forsook the court of *Pharaoh*, to wander many years in a wilderness, and die there. The prophets suffered persecution and death for their plainness in reproving the fashionable vices of their times. The blessed Saviour of the world, and his apostles, and the first proselytes to Christianity, exposed themselves to every kind of affliction and distress, and to violent and infamous deaths. So that they cannot, with any shadow of reason, be suspected of having bribed witnesses to testify to their miracles; nor indeed had they any secular advantage to offer in order to gain proselytes.

The witnesses of a supposed miracle must, in order to its credibility, be supposed persons of such understanding, as to be equal to the examination of the fact. Now the Scripture-miracles were performed before such numbers, that, according to the common course of human capacities, they must have been seen and examined by many persons, not only of sufficient understanding for enquiring into a simple fact, but of more shrewdness and sagacity than ordinary. Nor was there any superior capacity necessary to determine whether the *Red-sea* was really miraculously divided, when the thousands of *Israel* passed through it in full march, and saw the  
waters

waters as a wall on their right hand, and on their left. Nor was there any occasion for great sagacity to convince those who saw some hundreds of diseased people healed with a word, that real miracles were wrought. Nor was there any subtlety of discernment necessary to convince the disciples of *Christ*, who had conversed with him for several years, who heard him speak as never man spoke, that he, who after his death appeared to several hundreds together, and often conversed intimately with the eleven, for six weeks, was the same person, their well-known Lord and Master, whom they saw crucified on mount *Calvary*.

It is said in the above definition of a proper miracle, that, in order to credibility, it is necessary, that the effect be such as to be subject to the full examination of the spectators. There are very few of the Scripture-miracles that were not of too substantial and permanent a nature, to be in any manner imitated by the *præstigiæ*, or tricks of impostors. A sudden appearance, for a short time, of any strange and unaccountable kind, might be questioned. But a body diseased for many years, cured with a word, a withered limb restored in a moment, a distracted brain instantly redressed, a dæmon authoritatively dispossessed, a man four days buried, recalled to life; these are effects of power too substantial to be mistaken; and too lasting to be suspected of having passed through a superficial examination.

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Lastly, it is said in the above definition of a proper and credible miracle, that it must be declared by the worker of it to be wrought expressly in confirmation of some particular doctrine, which doctrine must be such as to commend itself to the unprejudiced reason of mankind, and to bear the marks of a revelation worthy of God, and useful for men. A miracle, or wonderful effect, connected with no particular doctrine, is to be called a natural or artificial phænomenon, or a prodigy; not a miracle in a theological sense, which last alone is what we are at present concerned with.

No miracle whatever, nor any number of miracles, would be sufficient to prove twice two to be five. Because we are more clearly and undoubtedly certain of the proportions of numbers, than of any thing supernatural. And all miracles are supernatural. And it would be absurd to imagine that the infinitely wise Author of reason should expect us to question the *certain* information of our reason upon evidence *less certain*.

Again, if miracles are pretended to be wrought in proof of a doctrine which leads to any vicious or impious practice, as we may, by a proper examination, and due use of our faculties, be more certain, that such a doctrine cannot be from God, than we can be, that a pretended miracle, in support of it, is from him, it is plain, we are to reject both the doctrine and pretended miracle,

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as insufficient against the clear and unquestionable dictates of reason. But if miracles, answering in every part the above definition, are wrought before credible witnesses, in express attestation of a doctrine, though not discoverable by reason, yet not contradictory to it, and tending to the advancement of virtue and happiness, we ought in any reason to conclude such miracles, when properly attested, to have been performed by the power of God, or of some being authorised by him; and may judge ourselves safe in receiving them as such; because we cannot suppose that God would leave his creatures in a state obnoxious to remediless delusion; nay, we cannot but think it criminal to neglect, or oppose, miracles in such a manner attested, or the doctrine intended to be established by them.

It has been objected against the account, we have in Scripture, of innumerable miracles performed by *Moses*, and the prophets, *Christ*, and his apostles; That it is not likely, they should be true, because we have none such in our times. That, as we have no experience of miracles, we have no reason to believe that ever there were any performed.

Supposing it were strictly true, that we have no experience, or ocular conviction, of the possibility of miracles, which is by no means to be taken for granted; those who urge this objection, would do well to consider, before they embark their unbelief upon it, how far it will

carry them. If, because we see no miracles now, we may safely argue, that there never were any, it will be as good sense to say, Because we now see an earth, a sun, moon, and stars; there never was a time, when they were not; there never was a time, when the Divine wisdom governed his natural, or moral system otherwise than he does now; there are no different states of things, nor any different exigencies in consequence of those differences; it is absurd to conceive of any change in any one particular, or in the general oeconomy of the universe.

The account we have in the New Testament, of the dæmoniacs miraculously cured by our Saviour, has, particularly, been thought to pinch so hard, that some have, in order to get rid of the difficulty, attempted, (in my humble opinion, altogether unwarrantably) to explain away the whole doctrine of possession by spirits. How comes it, say the objectors, that we read of such numbers of persons in *Christ's* time possessed with dæmons; while we have no instances of any such in our days? To this some gentlemen, whose abilities I should be proud to equal, and of whose sincere belief of Christianity I have no more doubt than of my own, have given an answer, which I cannot help thinking extremely hurtful to the cause. "The dæmoniacs," say those gentlemen, "were no more than mad people, who were not then, nor are now, possessed with spirits, any more than other diseased persons."

“ persons. There being spoken of as possessed;  
 “ was no other than a common way of expressing  
 “ their disease or distress; and the dispossessing  
 “ them, was only the cure; which was still mi-  
 “ raculous.” But, if any man can reconcile this  
 notion with the accounts we have from the evan-  
 gelists, he must have a key, which, I own, I am  
 not master of. That a set of grave historians,  
 sacred historians, should fill up their narration  
 with accounts of what was said by such a num-  
 ber of madmen; that those madmen should  
 universally speak to better purpose, than the bulk  
 of those, who were in their senses; that they  
 should at once, the first moment they cast their  
 eyes on our Saviour, know him to be the *Christ*,  
 while some even of his own disciples hardly knew  
 what to think of him; that our Saviour himself  
 should enumerate his casting out evil spirits,  
 besides curing diseases, as a miracle entirely sepa-  
 rate, and of its own kind, and mention his  
 conquest over *Satan* and his wicked spirits, as a  
 mark of his being the true *Messiah*; that he  
 should allow his disciples to continue in a mistake  
 with respect to a point of such consequence; that  
 he should advise them to rejoice more in the  
 thought of their names being written in heaven,  
 than in their having received power over spirits,  
 without telling them at the same time, that they  
 were altogether in a mistake about their having  
 received any such power; that we should be  
 gravely told that the madness (not the spirits)



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which possessed the men in the tombs, intreated our Saviour to send it into the herd of swine; that the madness (not the spirit) should so often intreat and adjure him not to send it to the place of torment before the time, that is, probably, before the last judgment, or perhaps an earlier period spoken of in the *Apocalypse*; that all these solemn accounts should be given in such a history, and nothing to shew them to be figurative, nor, as far as I can see, any possibility of at all understanding them otherwise than literally; seems wholly unaccountable. Nor can I help thinking that the solution is incomparably harder to grapple with than the difficulty. I deny not, that there are passages in the gospels, where a disease is in one place spoken of as an infliction of an evil spirit, and in another as a mere disease. But this does not at all affect the point in dispute; because the question is not, Whether the dæmoniacks spoken of in the gospels were not persons labouring under a bodily complaint besides the possession by evil spirits; but, Whether the people said to be possessed, were at all possessed, or not. If a person, whose brain was disordered, was likewise possessed with an evil spirit, he might with sufficient propriety be spoke of in one place as a lunatic, and in another as a dæmoniac.

I should humbly judge it a much more easy and natural way of getting over this difficulty, to proceed upon our Saviour's answer to his disciples concerning

concerning the man born blind. "Neither did  
 "this man sin," says he (in any extraordinary man-  
 ner) "nor his parents; but that the works of  
 "God might be made manifest in him." If the  
 whole human species are offenders, and at all  
 times deserving of punishment, where is the  
 difficulty of conceiving, that it might be suitable  
 to the Divine scheme of government, that at the  
 time of our Saviour's appearance, or any other  
 period, a greater variety of punishments might  
 be suffered to fall upon a guilty race of beings,  
 and afterwards, through the Divine mercy, their  
 sufferings might be abated. Particularly, is  
 there not even a propriety in God's giving to  
*Satan* and his angels, the antient and inveterate  
 opposers of the *Messiah*, and his kingdom, a  
 short triumph over mankind, in order to render  
 the *Messiah's* victory over him more conspicuous,  
 and more glorious. This I say on the supposition,  
 that possession by evil spirits was altogether  
 peculiar to those antient times; and that there  
 is at present absolutely no such thing in any  
 country in the world. But, before any person  
 can positively affirm, that there is no such  
 thing in our times, as possession by spirits,  
 he must be sure of his knowing perfectly  
 the natures and powers of spirits, and be able  
 to shew the absolute impossibility of a spirit's  
 having communication with embodied minds;  
 and must be capable of shewing, that  
 all

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all the symptoms and appearances in diseases, in madness, and in dreams, are utterly inconsistent with the notion of spirits having any concern with our species. Now to establish this negative, will be so far from being easy to do, that, on the contrary, universal opinion, as well as probability, and the whole current of revelation, are on the opposite side. Who can say, that it is absurd to imagine such a state of the human frame, especially of the brain, as may give spiritual agents an opportunity of making impressions upon the mind? Who can say, that sleep may not lay the mind open to the impressions of foreign beings; and that waking again may not, by some laws of nature unknown to us, exclude their communications? Who can say, that part (I do not say all) of the symptoms in phrenetic, epileptic, lunatic, and melancholic cases, especially in the more violent paroxysms, may not be owing to the agency of spirits? Were this to be allowed, it would not at all vacate the use of medicines, or dieting. For if the access of spirits to our minds depends upon the state of our bodies, which it is no way absurd to suppose, it is evident, an alteration in the state of the body may prevent their access to our minds, and deprive them of all power over us; and in that light, medicines and regimen may be effectual even against spirits, so far as they may be concerned, by being so against the natural disorder

disorder of the frame occasioned merely by the disease. So that there may, for any thing we know to the contrary, be dreams, in which foreign agents may be concerned, and there may be others occasioned by mere fumes of indigestion, as the poet speaks. There may be epileptics, and maniacs, who are so from mere obstructions and disorders in the brain and nerves; and there may at this day be others attacked by those maladies, whose distress may be heightened by wicked spirits. The amazing strength of even women, and youths, in some of their violent fits, seems to countenance a suspicion, that something acts in them, separate from their own natural force, and which is hardly to be accounted for from any extraordinary flow of animal spirits. And why in Scripture we should have so many accounts of revelations communicated in dreams; from whence probably the Heathens, ever since *Homer*, have had the same notion; seems unaccountable upon any other foot, than that of supposing some natural mechanical connexion between a particular state of the bodily frame, and communications from separate spirits. The behaviour of the prophet in the Old Testament, who calls for an instrument of music, when he waits for an inspiration, does likewise countenance the same notion. As if the natural effect of melody was to open the way to the mind in a mechanical manner, in order to the more full admission of the supernatural communications. To conclude  
what

- what I would say on the difficulty of the dæmoni-  
niacs in the gospel-history, I do not pretend to  
decide which is the true solution. All I contend  
for is, That to explain away the reality of the  
presence of spirits, is, in my opinion, unwarrant-  
able and dangerous, and removing a less diffi-  
culty, to put a greater in its place.

To return to the general objection, I was upon  
before this digression, which was, That we have  
no reason to believe there ever were any miracles,  
because we have no experience of any in our  
times; I have to say farther, that the objection is  
not founded upon truth; at least not upon an  
unquestionable truth. For many persons of  
good judgment have declared it to be their opin-  
ion, that among the innumerable fictitious accounts  
of supernatural appearances, and prodigies, some,  
even in these later ages, are in such a manner  
authenticated, that to deny them, a man must  
deny every information he can receive by any  
means whatever, besides his own immediate  
senses, which does not seem highly rational.  
Besides, are not the completions of a multitude of  
prophecies, which we have at this day extant be-  
fore our eyes, as the predicted lasting ruinous  
state of *Babylon* and *Tyre*, the total subjection, to  
the latest ages, of the once illustrious kingdom of  
*Egypt*, the remaining marks of the general deluge;  
the unequalled and unaccountable condition of  
the *Jews* for so long a period of time; the estab-  
lishment, and continuance to the end of the  
world,

world, of the Christian religion, are not these standing miracles conspicuous in our time? But of this more elsewhere. Upon the whole, it is evident, that if the objection was founded on truth, it could not be valid; because different periods may require different measures of government; and to say that there could never have been any miracles, because there are none now (were it true, that there are no effects of miraculous interposition remaining in our times) would be as absurd, as to say, that the axis of the earth must point exactly the same way it did two thousand years ago; whereas the observations of antient astronomers have put the doctrine of its continual change of direction, and the precession of the equinoxes, out of all possible doubt. But if the objection is not founded upon truth, it must of course fall to the ground.

Prophecy is a miraculous history, or account of events before they happen. This being unquestionably above the reach of human capacity, it is a proper and convincing evidence, that the revelation, in which it is given, is not a human production. To pretend to determine the foundation, or the *modus*, of the prescience of the actions of free agents, may be wholly out of our reach in the present state. But we can form some conception of its being possible, in some such manner as the following, though it may not perhaps be safe to affirm, that the following is the true account of it.

Do

Do we not commonly see instances of very sound judgments passed by wise men on the future conduct of others? May we not suppose, that angels, or other beings of superior reach, may be capable, from their more exact knowledge of human nature, to pass a much more certain judgment of the future behaviour of our species? And is there any thing less to be expected, than that He who made us, who perfectly knows our frame, who immediately perceives the most secret motions of our minds, and likewise foresees with the utmost exactness, and without a possibility of being deceived, the whole preceding and concurrent circumstances in which any of his creatures can at any future time be engaged (as it is evident, that all things are the effect of his directing providence, except the actions of free creatures, to whom he has given liberty and power of action within a certain sphere) is any thing less to be expected, I say, than that our infinitely wise Creator should form a judgment, suitable to his wisdom, of the future conduct of his creatures? And to imagine that this judgment should at all affect the future behaviour of the creature, seems as groundless as to conclude that one created being's judging of the future conduct of another should actually influence and over-rule his conduct. The judgment is, by the supposition, formed upon the character of the person judged of; not the character influenced by the judgment. There are some passages of  
 Scripture,

Scripture, which seem to lead us to this manner of conception of this difficult point.

When *David* (1 *Sam.* xxii. 12.) pursued by the inveterate hatred of king *Saul*, consulted the oracle, whether, if he staid in the city of *Keilah*, the people of that city would give him up to his enemy; the answer he received was, That they would. It is plain in this case, that the Divine prescience of the conduct of that people, in the event of *David's* trusting himself in their hands, did not arise from God's having decreed, that they should give up *David*: for if it had been decreed, it must have come to pass. Nor was their treachery foreknown because it was future. For it was not future, having been disappointed, and never coming to be executed. Nor could it be eventually predetermined, that in case of *David's* staying in the city, the people should give him up into the hands of his enemy. For the event shews, that it was not the Divine scheme, that he should fall into the snare, but that he should escape it. There seems nothing therefore left to conclude, but that the Divine prescience of the conduct of the people of *Keilah* was founded in a thorough and perfect insight into the treacherous character of that people, and perhaps the knowledge of actual designs formed by them to betray *David* into the hands of the king.

Again, when God foretells (*Gen.* xviii. 19.) that *Abraham* would "command his household



“ after him, and they would keep the way of “ the Lord ;” He plainly shews upon what that prescience was grounded, in saying, “ I *know* “ him, that he will command, &c.” That is, I so fully know his zeal and affection for the true God, that I foresee, he will set up and support my worship in his family, and enjoin it his posterity, in opposition to the idolatry and polytheism which prevails among the heathen around.

In the same manner, in the New Testament, though the apostle *Paul* foretells, that there should not be a life lost of those who sailed with him, notwithstanding the severity of the tempest; we find afterwards, that the predictions depended upon the sailors staying in the ship. So that probably what was foreseen, was, that the ship and crew might be saved by the skill of the sailors; and that, if they deserted it, it must perish.

These, and other passages, which might be quoted, seem to favour the preceding attempt to solve part of the difficulty of the Divine prescience of the actions of free creatures. But it must still be confessed, that the subject is involved in such intricacies as we shall not in all probability be able to clear up in the present state. However it be, we are not immediately concerned with any thing, but what may affect our doing our duty. And that neither prescience, nor any thing else, does any way abridge our freedom in performing that, and so securing our final happiness,

ness, we need not use any reasoning to be convinced. We have no other assurance that we exist, than feeling. And we have the same for our freedom. Every man feels, that in all his actions, whether virtuous, vicious, or indifferent, he is naturally free. And what we feel we cannot bring ourselves seriously to doubt, if we would; though we may cavil at any thing.

That many parts of Scripture-prophecy, not yet accomplished, are obscure, and of doubtful signification; so that the most learned interpreters are divided in their sentiments about what may be intended by them; must be acknowledged. And that this is no more, than might have been expected, will appear by considering, that had many future events been too clearly predicted, the obstinacy of men might have rendered miracles necessary upon every occasion to bring about the completion of them.

With all the pretended obscurity of prophecy, there are still enough of unquestionable and conspicuous completions, to shew, that the predictions of Scripture were given, not by chance, nor by bold conjecture, nor by partial informations from evil spirits, as some have thought was the case of some of the responses of the heathen oracles; but by One, who saw through futurity, down to the most distant periods, from the time of their being given out; by Him, who holds the reins of government in his own hand. The

few following examples may serve as a proof of this.

*Moses*, in his account of the deluge, (*Gen.* viii. 21, 22.) assures mankind, in the name of God, that there should never be another universal flood; but that the four seasons of the year, and the revolutions of day and night, should go on without interruption to the end of the world. This is one of those predictions, which could not have been written since the event, as has been pretended, in derogation of some others; the period taken in by it not being yet concluded. And considering the extraordinary wisdom so conspicuous in the character of *Moses*, it does not seem conceivable, that he, who expected to have the opinion of future ages as an inspired person, should, without Divine authority, have ventured his whole character upon such an affirmation as this, which he could have let alone; lest the event should have detected him for an impostor. For how could he know, without inspiration, what change in nature might happen, which might totally change the course of days, nights, and seasons? How could he know, that there might not happen some such revolution in his own times, to the utter ruin of his character as a prophet? How could he know, that another deluge might not come according to the order of nature; and as he had published the account of the preservation of *Noah* and his family in the ark, was it not natural to expect, that upon the  
least

least appearance of such another judgment, people would set about making arks for their own safety, which would have proved the total degrading of his character, as a prophet, and a law-giver. The event hitherto has answered the prediction, and, in all probability, future ages will fully prove it to have been given from God.

The same wise lawgiver of the *Jews* founded a very important part of that constitution in a manner extremely injudicious, and improvident, if we suppose him not to have acted upon Divine authority. What I refer to, is his confining the priesthood, which he declares to be everlasting, to the single family of *Aaron*. Had he not done this upon Divine authority, he must have run an obvious hazard of the downfall of the religious polity he was setting up, by the possible failure of male issue in *Aaron's* family, who had only two sons, *Eleazor* and *Ithamar*. This part of the Mosaic constitution may therefore be considered as a prediction; that in a course of several thousand years, there should not be wanting male issue proceeding from one single family, at that time consisting only of two persons, Had this prediction failed; had these two persons, or their posterity, been cut off, by natural death, or by an enemy, the whole *Jewish* oeconomy must have sunk, for want of a priesthood, and all the prophecies had been falsified, or had never been given.

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In the book of *Jeremiah*, chap. L. and following, it is foretold, that *Babylon*, the greatest city, and seat of the greatest empire at that time in the world, should not only be destroyed, but that it should *never* be again inhabited. Which last particular no man of prudence or judgment would have ventured his credit as a prophet upon, when he could have avoided giving any such prediction, unless he had been by Divine inspiration assured of what he affirmed. For nothing could well be imagined more improbable, than that the seat of the empire of the world should be destroyed; and still more unlikely was it, that it should never be rebuilt. But the event shews the truth of the prophecy. And this prediction is likewise one of those of which it cannot be pretended that it was written since the event.

In *Ezek. xxx. 13.* it is expressly foretold, that there should be "no more a prince of the land of *Egypt*." No man of judgment would have ventured, without authority, his credit upon such an asseveration, as he could have been wholly silent on the head. For who could know, without inspiration, that there should never more a prince a native of *Egypt*, sit on the throne of that kingdom? The event however has verified the prediction. For soon after the time when it was given, *Egypt* was made a province of the *Persian* empire, and has been governed ever since by foreigners, having been, since the fall of the *Persian* monarchy, subject successively to the *Macedonians*,

*donians*, the *Saracens*, the *Mamelukes*, and the *Turks*, who possess it at present. This is one of those prophecies against which it cannot be objected, that it is possible it may have been written since the event.

In the xxvith chap. of *Ezekiel* it is foretold, that the great and powerful city of *Tyre*, at that time the general resort of traders, and mart of the world, should be *utterly desolate*, so as to be a place for the *spreading of nets*, and should *never more be rebuilt*. This prediction, at the time it was given so utterly improbable, has been literally fulfilled, as may be seen in *Maundrell's Voyage*. And Dr. *Pococke*, late bishop of *Offory*, says, in his *Travels in the East*, that as he sailed by the place where it formerly stood, he saw the ruins of it covered with fishing nets.

The Scriptures of both old and new Testament are full of predictions of the dispersion of the *Jews* for a long period of time, as a punishment for their vices, and of their being at last restored to their own land in great triumph and happiness. So early as the days of *Moses*, whose æra profane history confirms to have been about the time we place it, *viz.* above three thousand years ago, we have predictions of the ruin which was to come upon that people in case of their disobedience (and which did come accordingly) so clear and explicit, that no writer of our times, with the help of history, and particularly, *Josephus's* account of the destruction of *Jerusalem*, and with

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the advantage of knowing the present unhappy condition of that people almost in all the countries of the world but our own, could in an imitation of the prophetic style describe their case more exactly. In the xxviii<sup>th</sup> chapter of *Deuteronomy*, *Moses* threatens their disobedience with judgments and plagues of every kind; particularly that they should “become an astonishment, a proverb, and a by-word in all countries;” that “an enemy should come upon them as swiftly as eagles,” probably alluding to their conquest by the *Romans*; that they should in the severity of the siege be reduced “to eat their very children;” that they should be “scattered through all countries of the world;” and that they should be forced “to serve other gods,” as they accordingly are, in the countries, where the inquisition is established, obliged to worship the host, which numbers of them comply with, though a gross violation of the second commandment, to avoid falling into the hands of that merciless court; and that among the nations where they should be scattered, they should “have no ease nor rest,” but a trembling “heart,” and “failing of eyes,” and “sorrow,” and “continual fear for their lives,” with many other threatnings to the same purpose.

It is also foretold by the following prophets, as well as by *Moses*, that, notwithstanding this unexampled dispersion of the *Jews* into all nations, they should be still preserved a distinct people;

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that God “will not destroy them utterly,” but that “when they shall call to mind, among all “the nations, whither God has driven them, and “shall return to the Lord, he will turn their “captivity, and gather them from all the nations—from the farthest parts of the earth—“even in the LATTER days.” That “though “he makes a full end of all other nations,” (by revolutions, and mixtures of one people with another, which renders it impossible to distinguish their genuine descendants) “yet he will “not make a full end of them;” but “a remnant of them” shall be kept unmixed with any other people, and “shall return out of all countries whither God has driven them;” that he will “set up an ensign for the nations, and will “assemble the outcasts of ISRAEL,” and “gather together the dispersed of *Judah*” (the posterity of the ten tribes; at present, according to scripture-prophecy undistinguished; as well as of the two) “from the four corners of the earth; which shews that the return here spoken of, is not that from the *Babylonish* captivity; as is also evident from its being fixed to the “latter days,” and from its being also spoken of by the prophet *Hosea*, who lived after the return from the seventy years captivity at *Babylon*, and by *Ezekiel*, who lived in the captivity itself.

And in the New Testament it is clearly foretold by *Christ*, that *Jerusalem* should be destroyed with such destruction “as had not been since



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“ the beginning of the world, nor ever should  
 “ be.” And it is remarkable that he again expressly mentions the “ eagles ;” in all probability to point out the *Romans*, (who bore eagles on their standards) for the executioners of the Divine vengeance on that perverse people. *Josephus’s* history of that tragical complication of events, corresponds exactly to our Saviour’s prediction of it. He also foretells that the *Jews* should be carried “ captive into all nations, and that *Jerusalem* “ should be trodden down of the *Gentiles*, till the “ times of the *Gentiles* should be fulfilled.” In the Epistles there are various predictions to the same purpose. And we accordingly see that people to this day preserved distinct from all others in the world, without king, without country, without government to enforce the observance of their ceremonial law, which yet they keep up with great strictness, wherever they can.

That through all the changes, which have happened in all the other kingdoms of the earth, from the date of the first of these predictions to the present time (a period of more than three thousand years) that people should have had exactly the fortune that was foretold them by *Moses*, and that they should now in so wonderful and unexampled a manner be preserved unmixed with, and easily distinguishable from, the people of all the countries where they are scattered ; and this in spite of the cruel usage they have had in most countries, which might have been expected

pected to have driven them long ago to give up their religion, and mix with the people among whom they lived; and that there should nothing in this long course of years have happened, to render it impossible; but that, on the contrary, it should be probable, that the remaining prediction of their return to their own land, will be accomplished, as well as the rest; this gives, upon the whole, such a view, as is not to be equalled by any thing else in the world; the most amazing of all phænomena; and shews that prophecy is given by authority from the same by whom the government of the world is carried on; since none but He, or whom he authorises, could thus declare the end from beginning.

No one can imagine the following predictions to be applicable to any other than the *Messiah*. *Gen.* iii. 15. the first prediction is given of him, *viz.* That “the seed of the woman” should bruise the head of the serpent.” None but *Christ* could properly be called the seed of the “woman.” For he alone was born of a woman without concurrence of man. Nor did any one but he effectually bruise the head of the serpent, or destroy the power of *Satan*. Again, he is several different times afterwards promised to *Abraham*, as he in whom “all the families of the earth should be blessed.” Now, there never was any single person, besides *Christ*, who was a blessing to the “whole world.” *Gen.* xlix. it is foretold that  
the

the "sceptre should not depart from *Judah*, till "*Shiloh* should come," and that "to him should "be the gathering of the people." It is known, that the *Jews* became subject to the *Romans* about the time of the appearance of *Christ*. And the gathering of the people to him is very conspicuous in the general diffusion of his religion over most parts of the world. The words of *Moses*, *Deut.* xviii. 15. are applicable to none but *Christ* only. "The Lord shall raise up unto thee "a Prophet, from the midst of thee, like unto "me." But no prophet, priest, or king, ever rose among that people like to *Moses*, but *Christ* only. For from *Moses* to *Christ*, no lawgiver arose among the *Jews*; their state being fixed by God himself, to continue unchanged till the appearance of the *Messiah*.

The predictions of *Isaiab*, xi. 1, 3, 6, &c. are still clearer, "Unto us a child is born; unto "us a son is given; and the government shall "be upon his shoulders. His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, "the everlasting Father, the Prince of peace." [Which titles are somewhat different in the *Septuagint* translation, but such as are applicable to none but *Christ* only.] "Of the increase of "his government and peace there shall be no "end, upon the throne of *David*, and his kingdom, to order and establish it with judgment, "and justice from henceforth even for ever." And in the xliii. chap. Behold my servant—  
mine

“ mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth. I  
 “ have put my spirit upon him—he shall set  
 “ judgment in the earth ; and the isles shall wait  
 “ for his law.”

Nor are those of *Jeremiab* less plainly applica-  
 ble to *Christ*, and to him only. Chap. xxiii.  
 and xxxiii. “ I will raise unto *David* a righte-  
 “ ous Branch, and a King shall reign and prof-  
 “ per, and shall execute judgment and justice  
 “ in the earth. And this is his name, whereby  
 “ he shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTE-  
 “ OUSNESS.”

And in *Ezekiel* xxxiv, &c. “ I will set up one  
 “ shepherd over them” (a shepherd of a people  
 always signifies a prince or ruler) “ and he shall  
 “ feed them, even my servant *David* ;” plainly  
 not *David* the son of *Jesse* ; he having been dead  
 long before *Ezekiel*’s time. “ And I will make  
 with them a covenant of peace, &c. One King  
 “ shall be king over them all ; neither shall  
 “ they defile themselves any more with their  
 “ idols”.

It is predicted by *Haggai*, that “ the desire of  
 “ all nations should come ;” the *Shiloh*, translated  
 by the LXX. the “ accomplishment of promises.”  
 How much the coming of the *Messiah* was the  
 desire of all nations is shewn above, and how  
 properly *Christ* may be called the accomplishment  
 of promises is known to all, who know his reli-  
 gion.

Not

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Not less express, than magnificent, is the prediction of *Daniel*, chap. vii. "I saw in the night  
 "visions, and behold one, like the SON OF MAN,  
 "came with the clouds of heaven, and came to  
 "the antient of days, and they brought him  
 "near before him. And there was given him  
 "dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all  
 "people, nations, and languages should serve  
 "him. His dominion is an everlasting domi-  
 "nion; and his kingdom that which shall not  
 "be destroyed." Of the title, "Son of man," which is found twice or thrice in the Old Testament, it may be cursorily remarked, that our Saviour seems to have been particularly pleased with it; as that name is given him in the antient Scriptures; as it expresses his sacred office of the deliverer of mankind, and suits the glorious humiliation he voluntarily condescended to, in assuming the human nature, and passing a life on earth for the important purpose of restoring a ruined world.

In the prophecies of *Isaiab*, *Ezekiel*, and *Mala-chi*, he is spoken of as he that was to be the "light of the *Gentiles*, their desire, their ruler;" and that through him the "name of God" should be great among the Heathen." Nor is there any one to whom these characters can be applied, but *Christ* only.

The important circumstance of his giving his life for the world is clearly held forth by the prophets *Daniel* and *Isaiab*, the former of which  
 speaks

speaks of him as to appear "seven weeks," that is forty-nine years, taking, according to prophetic style, a day for a year) "from the going forth of the commandment to restore and build *Jerusalem*," and that he should be "cut off; but not for himself." And the latter says of him; "Surely he hath born our griefs—he was wounded for our transgressions; he was bruised for our iniquities. He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter; and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth. For the transgressions of my people was he stricken. And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death." Which words are suspected to be transposed, and that his death ought to have been put with the wicked, and his grave with the rich; as he was crucified between two thieves, and buried by *Joseph of Arimathea*, who was rich. "He was numbered with the transgressors, and bare the sin of many, and made intercession for sinners."

It is foretold by *Isaiab* chap. xxxv. that the *Messiah* should perform many great and beneficial miracles; that "the eyes of the blind should be opened; and the ears of the deaf unstopped; that the lame man should leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing." Many minute circumstances are foretold of him, such as his being of the tribe of *Judah* and seed of *David*; that he should be born at *Bethlehem* (*Mic.*

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(*Mic.* v. 2) that he should ride in humble triumph into the city of *Jerusalem*, (*Zach.* ix. 9. that he should be sold for thirty pieces of silver, (*ibid.* xi. 12.) that he should be scourged, buffeted, and spit upon, (*Isa.* l. 6.) that his hands and feet should be pierced, (*Psal.* xxiv. 16.) that he should be numbered among malefactors, (*Isa.* liii. 12.) that he should have gall and vinegar offered him to drink, (*Psal.* lxix. 21.) that they who saw him crucified, should mock at his trusting in God, (*Psal.* xxii. 8.) that the soldiers should cast lots for his garments, (*ibid.* 18.) that he should be buried by a rich man, (*Isa.* liii. 9.) and that he should not see corruption, (*Psal.* xvi. 10.) The completion of all which predictions in *Christ* is visible in his history in the New Testament.

To what character besides that of *Christ*, are all these predictions applicable? And are they not all strictly applicable to *Christ*, and clearly fulfilled in him? Should now a sett of satirical, or enigmatical writings be proposed to be explained; who would hesitate whether the true sense, and proper application of them was discovered, when a sense was found, which tallied exactly in every particular? who would imagine those writings to have been composed by chance, which shewed so much regularity and connexion, and which suited so well the proposed explication of them?

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The predictions which *Christ* himself delivered concerning events that were to happen after his time, were confirmations no less authentic of the Divine authority of his doctrine, than the completion in him, of the prophecies given of old. Besides those he gave of his own death, with the particular circumstances of it; of the behaviour of his disciples on that occasion; of the descent of the Holy Ghost, and the miraculous powers to be communicated to his disciples; besides these, he gave some, which cannot be pretended to have been forged after the events, as has been alledged of some of the Scripture prophecies. His predictions of the destruction of *Jerusalem*, and dispersion, for a very long period, of the *Jews* into all nations, but so as they should be preserved distinct from all other people in order to their restoration; of the general prevalence of his religion over the world, and its continuance to all ages; and of the mischiefs, consequent upon the perversion of it; these are events, which at that time were to the highest degree improbable. It was altogether needless for him to risque his credit upon the completion of these predictions; nor is it to be supposed, a person of his wisdom would have needlessly hazarded the confutation of his whole scheme in such a manner, if he had not been certain that what he foretold would be fully accomplished, and that though heaven and earth were to pass away,



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away, his word should stand, as the event hitherto has sufficiently shewn.

That a power of so extraordinary a kind, and which should produce such important effects, especially upon the religious state of the world, as Popery has done, should be predicted in Scripture, was reasonably to be expected. Accordingly by *Daniel*, who flourished near three thousand years ago, it is foretold, chap. vii. 19. that there should be a tyrannical power, which should “ wear out the saints of the Most High,” and that they should “ be given into his hands until a time, and times, and the dividing of times.” that is a year, and two years, and half a year, which give one thousand two hundred and sixty days, which in prophetic style signifies so many years. This period is also mentioned in five different predictions in the New Testament. This power is spoken of, verse 23. as a kingdom “ different from all before it.” And so indeed it is; being a *religious* tyranny, or a secular kingdom founded on a pretence of religion. It is represented as a monster with “ teeth of iron,” and “ claws of brass;” and very properly; for it is the character of that merciless religion to destroy all who oppose it, and to endeavour (by driving those who are so unhappy as to fall under its tyranny to make shipwreck of conscience) to damn all whom it destroys. It is spoken of as “ devouring, stamping in pieces,” and laying waste the whole world, as “ changing times  
“ and

“and laws,” and “speaking great words against the Most High.” All which suit the blood-thirsty cruelty, the unequalled arrogance, and blasphemous impiety of the bishops and church of *Rome* to the greatest exactness. It is there said, that he should not “regard the desire of women;” which plainly points out the prohibition of marriage; that he should “honour gods-protectors,” that is, tutelar saints, and “a god, whom his fathers knew not,” a wafer-god, of which god some thousands are made in one day by the priests, and eaten, and digested by the people. See also 1 *Tim.* iv.

In the Apocalypse, chap. xi, xii, &c. it is copiously described, where it is represented under the appearance of a monster, or “wild beast,” whose “seven heads” signify, as afterwards explained, the seven hills upon which *Rome* was built, and “ten horns” the ten kingdoms, into which the *Roman* empire was divided, whose “blasphemous names” are notorious, as of God’s vice-gerent, Our lord god the pope, Vice-god, and the like, who “wars with the saints, and overcomes them;” who receives “power over the nations,” and is “worshipped” by them. The same is also afterwards represented under the character of the “great harlot,” or idolatress, with whom the “kings of the earth have committed fornication,” that is the idolatry of worshipping the images of saints, and kneeling to the host. She is afterwards re-

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presented as “drunk with the blood” of the martyrs of *Jesus*. The kings of the earth are afterwards mentioned as “giving their power to “the monster,” as it is notorious that most of the kings in *Europe* acknowledged the pope for their lord god, and held their crowns of him, as some of them do still. The same power is likewise held forth under the figure of a great city, the seat of wealth, luxury, pleasure, riches, and commerce, one article of which commerce, peculiar to *Rome* papal, is her trade in the “souls of men.”

And by the apostle *Paul* this fatal delusion is called *The man of sin*, or the very abstract and quintessence of iniquity, a character fit only for the popish religion, as it alone of all religions contains an assemblage of all that is most exquisitely wicked, beyond what could have been thought within the reach of human invention unassisted by dæmons. Of which the infernal court of inquisition is a pregnant proof; where cruelty, the disposition the most opposite to all good, is carried to that diabolical excess, that few hearts are hard enough to bear the mere description of it in a book. The propriety of giving the appellation of *The man of sin*, to the Romish imposture, appears from considering, that it has had the peculiar cursed art not only to turn the mildest of all religions into a scene of the most horrible barbarity; but to make the most pure and heavenly system of doctrines and laws, which ever

were, or will be, given to men, an authority for establishing for points of faith the most hideous absurdities, and contradictions to common sense; and for licensing every abominable wickedness that has ever been thought of or practised. Inasmuch, that the fixed rates of absolution, for the most horrid and unnatural vices, stand appointed by their popes, and published in different editions. By which means, the great design of Christianity, which was *to teach men, to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly*, is defeated among the deluded proselytes to that infamous religion. For instead of this, popery teaches, that any man, who pays handsomely, may have an indulgence for any number of years to live in all manner of abominable impiety, profaneness, and impurity. Is not this *The man of sin*?

Whoever would see how exactly the Scripture predictions are suited to represent this diabolical delusion, has only to read the histories of popery, and accounts of the inquisition. There he will find what hideous ravage has been made by it in different countries. Witness their infamous croisades; the massacres of the *Waldenses* and *Albigenses*, of whom almost a million were reckoned to be slain. In thirty years from the founding of the order of the *Jesuits*, above eight hundred thousand protestants were put to death by the hand of the executioner only. The bloody butchering duke of *Alva* used to make it his

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boast of having cut off in a few years thirty thousand protestants in the *Netherlands*. The destruction of helpless victims sacrificed to that infernal fury the inquisition in one period of thirty years, is reckoned at one hundred and fifty thousand. Is not this dreadful and wide-wasting mischief, this terror of human nature, this hell on earth, properly represented as a monster, or wild beast, with iron teeth to devour and destroy, as drunk with blood, and aspiring to an authority above all that is called god, or is worshipped, that is, above all other power and government, challenging the privilege of the grand tyrant and destroyer?

These are only a few among many instances of the unequalled horrors of this fatal delusion, and of the exactness of the Scripture predictions, which can be applied to nothing else, that ever was heard of upon earth. And if in the days of the authors of the above predictions, there was nothing known among mankind, which might give the hint of such a power as that of Antichrist, or popery; and if no account of this power in our times, when it is so well known, can in prophetic style more clearly describe it, than we find it represented in the predictions of Scripture, let the opposers of prophecy account for this wonderful agreement between the prediction and the completion, as they best can.

These are a few, among almost innumerable predictions of future events, of which holy  
Scripture

Scripture is full. And, as these shew themselves clearly to be genuine revelations from God; the others contained in the same writings may in reason be supposed to be of the same original, tho' the times when they were given, and the exactness of their respective completions, should be more subject to cavil, than these here quoted. And the opposers of the revelation, in which these predictions are contained, are in reason obliged to give some plausible account, how they came there, if not by Divine inspiration.

Let Christianity have been introduced into the world when it would, it is impossible to give any rational or satisfying account of its prevalence and establishment, but its being a Divine institution. For supposing it forged in any age before or since the received date of about seventeen hundred years ago, it will be equally impossible to conceive how it should come to pass upon mankind, if it was a fiction. The Christian religion has been established upon the ruins of the national religion of every country, in which it has been received. It had therefore the united forces of regal power, sacerdotal craft, and popular superstition to bear down, before it could get footing in the world. Its character is directly opposite to the sordid views and secular interests of mankind, and acceptable to none but virtuous and elevated minds, which in all ages and nations have ever been comparatively a very small number of the species, and not fit, nor dis-

posed to struggle with, much less likely to get the better of the majority, so as to cram a sett of falsehoods down their throats.

All the false schemes of religion, which ever prevailed in the world, have come to be established either by the multitude's being led to embrace them by craft, or driven to it by force. That Christianity was established by craft, is on all accounts incredible, and particularly from considering its character, which is altogether separate from worldly views, or any kind of motives, which might incline men to deceive; and especially from its setting up upon the foot of the most strict integrity, of commanding all its votaries to avoid even the least appearance of evil, and by no means to think of doing evil for the sake of any possible good consequence. Such precepts as these would by no means have suited a scheme calculated for deceiving mankind. On the contrary, we always find the great doctrine preached up by impostors is, Zeal for the cause, rather than for the truth. This appears dreadfully conspicuous in the bloody catalogue of sufferers, who have fallen a sacrifice to the *Mahometan* and popish delusions. The opposers of Christianity are obliged, if they will shew themselves reasoners, to give some rational account of the establishment of it, upon the supposition of its being false. They are in reason obliged to shew how a religion requiring the most strict purity of heart and severity of manners, the  
mortifying

mortifying of inordinate lusts and inclinations, the avoiding every appearance of evil, and encountering all manner of difficulties, and even death itself, if required, in testimony for truth; they ought to shew how such a religion could have been established in the world by such seemingly unpromising and inadequate means, as those by which Christianity actually was propagated; and that all this might, in a way accountable by human reason, and suitable to the usual course of things, have come about in spite of universal opposition from all those in whose hands the secular power was then lodged; and in spite of that most unconquerable of all prejudices, which mankind have for the religion they were brought up in. The opposers of Christianity ought to shew that there have been instances similar to this; and that a few artless, illiterate fishermen might reasonably be supposed equal to a design of outwitting all mankind, imposing a set of gross falsehoods upon them, and confounding their understandings with fictitious miracles, which they voluntarily, no one knows why, swallowed down without examination; and the consequence of which was the overturning all the national religions of a great part of the world, in spite of the power of princes, the zeal of the priests, and the bigotry of the people. If they cannot find some rational and probable way of accounting for this strange and unexampled phenomenon, upon the supposition of Christianity's being a fiction;



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if they cannot shew, that fraud was used (for no one ever alledged force) they must yield the point, and acquiesce in the account given in the New Testament, to wit, That it made its way in the world by the power of its own irresistible evidence.

The author of our religion must either have been, truly and indeed, what he declares himself; the Son of God, and Saviour of the world, and his religion a Divine appointment; or he must have been an impostor, or an enthusiast, or madman, and his religion either a secular scheme, an involuntary delusion, or a pious fraud.

That *Jesus Christ* was no impostor will plainly appear, if we consider first what a monstrous pitch of desperate and abandoned wickedness was necessary to carry a person the lengths he went, if he was not really what he pretended. The whole body of history cannot produce such another instance of daring impiety. For no impostor ever arrogated such high honours and characters as he does; which to think of as mere fiction and groundless pretence, is startling to human nature. To suppose a man in his senses to go on, constantly and invariably for several years, giving out, that he was the beloved Son of God; that he came down from heaven, whither he was again to return; that he had enjoyed glory with God before the world was; that he had power to forgive sin; that he was to  
judge

judge the world; to hear him address the Deity as he does, *Jobn* xviith, appealing to Him for the truth of his pretensions, and keeping in the same strain to the last moment of his life; to suppose any man in his senses capable of all this frightful impiety, is imagining somewhat altogether unexampled, especially if we take along with it, that we have from this most impious of all impostors the best system of laws that ever was given to the sons of men, the peculiar excellence of which is their excluding all impiety, fraud, and secular views, teaching to avoid even the least appearance of evil, and to give up all for truth and conscience.

Again, what shadow, or surmise, of indirect dealing, what suspicion of any thing immoral, or unjustifiable, appears against his character? What fault were his enemies able to lay to his charge, when challenged by him, except that he had exposed their wickedness and hypocrisy? Even when *Judas*, who knew his whole conduct, desired to betray him, was he able to find any thing against him? Had his behaviour been at all suspicious or obnoxious, is there any reason to question whether *Judas* had it not in his power to have detected and informed against him? And is it to be supposed, that his inveterate wickedness would suffer any pretence for accusing his master, and justifying his own malice against him, to pass unimproved to the utmost?

Besides, if the author of our religion was an impostor,

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impostor, what was his scheme in deceiving mankind? Not any secular advantage. For it is notorious, that poverty, contempt, persecution, and death were his portion, according to his own prediction; that his followers had no better treatment for the first three centuries; that the emperor *Constantine's* giving secular advantages to the Christians was the first blow struck to the original disinterested purity of that religion; and that from the time the world was thrust into the church, religion began to decline, which shews, that secular views were inconsistent with its true design and genius.

If it was set up with a view to worldly grandeur, how comes it every where to inculcate the contempt of riches, honours, and pleasures, and the pursuit of things spiritual and heavenly? What steps were taken by *Christ*, or his followers, to aggrandize themselves? Was not, on the contrary, their practice suitable to their doctrine? Is not the whole of their character a perfect pattern of self-denial and abstinence? Who has ever convicted them of any one instance of worldly craft or design? It is certain from all accounts, sacred and profane, that at the time of *Christ's* appearance in the world, there was a general expectation of the *Messiah*; and that the idea formed by the gross apprehensions of the people, of the character he was to appear in, was that of a great prince. What could therefore be more natural for an impostor, than to take the  
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advantage of this prejudice, so favourable to a worldly scheme? Instead of which we find him, (and his apostles after they came once to understand the scheme he was upon) setting up on a quite different footing, the most unpopular plan, that could have been thought of; disclaiming all worldly views, and declaring that their profession led directly to poverty and suffering. It is indeed evident, that considering the universal prejudice of the *Jews* with respect to the character in which the Saviour of the world was to appear, it must have been impossible for a person of that nation to frame an idea of a suffering *Messiah*, but by inspiration, or from understanding the antient predictions concerning him in a manner quite different from what was usual among them.

Farther, what probability is there, that he who had sagacity enough to contrive a scheme, which did in effect prevail against all opposition, should yet be so imprudent, as to hazard the disappointment of his whole design by overloading it with so many incumbrances? Why should he pretend to be the Son of God, if it had not been true? How, indeed, could a mere human brain invent such a thought? How work out of itself the imaginations of his having enjoyed pre-existent glory with God, of his coming into the world to give his life for the life of the world; and of his being the appointed future Judge of the human race? There is something in this, which lies wholly

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wholly out of the way of mere humanity. And accordingly those who heard him, at least the unprejudiced, owned, that "he spoke as never man spoke." But farther; Why should he forwarn his followers of the discouraging consequences of their adherence to his religion, if he had been capable of deceiving? Why should he disappoint the inclinations and prejudices of the people, who wanted a worldly *Messiah*, if he himself aimed at worldly grandeur? Why should he prevent many from following him, who were disposed to do it, by undeceiving them, and informing them that his kingdom was not of this world? Why should he exert a supernatural power to withdraw himself from among them, when they were going to raise him to regal authority; if secular power was what he aspired after?

And, supposing Christianity an invention of later date, why should the Saviour of the world be represented in the supposed fictitious history; as suffering a shameful death? Would it not have been more likely to take with mankind, for the inventors of the scheme to have represented the author of the religion they wanted to persuade mankind to the belief of, as a victorious prince, who had got the better of all opposition, than as one who appeared on earth in the most lowly station; despised and abused, while he lived, and at last put to an infamous death between two thieves.

Let

Let it now be considered (if indeed it be worth while to consider what is so grossly absurd) what possibility there is of *Christ's* having been an enthusiast, or phrenetic. In order to judge properly of this, let it be computed, what degree of enthusiasm was necessary to bring a person to persuade himself, that he was the Saviour of the world, the *Messiah*, the Anointed of God, the Son of God, who had existed before the creation of this world, and was again to ascend to his former glory with God, after finishing the great work, for which he came into the world; what degree of enthusiasm or madness must that man have been worked up to, who could believe all this of himself, while he was really no more than another mortal? How miserable must his phreny have been? How confounded and broke all his faculties?

Next, let it be attended to, what suitableness there is between such a degree of distraction as this, and the whole character and conduct of the author of our religion. What single instance does he give of even common frailty, or of such imprudence as is observed at times in the conduct of the wisest men; in the conduct even of inspired men? While prophets, and apostles are in Scripture represented as falling into the common weaknesses of human nature (an argument of the truth of sacred history) his behaviour stands wholly clear of every instance of infirmity or frailty. Where are the ragings and bellowings  
of

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of enthusiasm? What signs did he give of a distempered, or over-heated imagination? Is not his whole conduct a perfect pattern of calmness, prudence, and caution? Does he not baffle the malicious and insnaring questions of his crafty enemies by a wisdom, which puts them all to silence? Are not his answers so guarded as to defeat their studied questions? Are the artful, the malicious, and the learned, more than children, or fools before him? Is this the character of an enthusiast? Does madness thus weigh its answers? Has the brain-sick visionary any such guard over himself, as to avoid the snare that is laid for him? Not only to avoid the snare himself, but likewise to put to confusion and silence his adversaries?

Let it also be considered, whether it is possible that such a system of doctrines and laws should be the production of an enthusiastic or distempered brain. A system, which has afforded the wisest of our species matter for study, examination, and admiration, ever since it has been published to the world. A set of doctrines more sublime than all that ever were taught mankind before. Discoveries, which neither sacred, nor profane antiquity had before exhibited to mankind. Solutions of the very difficulties, which had put the wisdom of the antients to a stand. Doctrines beyond the natural reach of human reason, and yet, when discovered, commending themselves to reason, and bearing the  
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internal marks of their Divine original. Precepts, whose purity puts the antient legislators to shame. Laws tending to improve human nature to its utmost perfection. A rule of life superior to all others, in its being absolutely perfect and complete, wanting nothing proper for the regulation of every passion and appetite, for directing to the complete performance of every social and relative duty, and fixing the only acceptable way of worshipping the One Supreme. A scheme, of which it is with reason said in Scripture, that the angels desire to look into it. Are these the productions of a visionary; these the reveries of a hot-brain'd enthusiast? It is plain, that his enemies neither thought him such, nor thought it possible to persuade the generality of the people, who conversed with him, to think so of him. For, if they could have made him pass for an enthusiastic or phrenetic person, they certainly would have chose that, as the easiest way of ridding themselves of him, and putting a stop to his scheme.

If it can be proved, that the religion of *Jesus* is by no means a fraud of any kind, it will unquestionably follow, that it is not a *pious* fraud. But, that Christianity is no fraud of any kind is plain not only from the excellency of its doctrines and precepts, the character of its author, and first propagators, and its express prohibition of every appearance of deceit on whatever pretence;  
but



but from the concurrence and coincidence of innumerable collateral evidences, which by their very nature were not within the reach of human contrivance. The whole body of revelation is to be considered as one uniform scheme, reaching from the beginning to the end of the world; in which the salvation of mankind by the *Messiah* is the principal part, or point of view, to which all the others lead, and with which they are connected, in such a manner, that the whole must stand, or fall together. So that, if the Christian religion be a delusion, it is evidently too great and extensive to be a delusion of human invention. That it is no contrivance of evil spirits, is plain from its direct tendency to promote virtue and goodness, and to banish all kinds of impiety and vice out of the world. It must therefore be a scheme of some being, or beings, superior to humanity. Which is owning it to be a Divine appointment: For we have no conception of a *fraud* contrived by any good being of the angelic rank.

That it should be prophesied at the beginning of the world, and recorded by *Moses*, a thousand years before the appearance of *Christ*, “that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent’s head,” and that *Christ* should be the seed of a woman, miraculously conceived without the concurrence of a male; could this have come about by human contrivance? When it is repeatedly foretold by the prophets,

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that

that *Christ* should come of the posterity of *Abram*, of *Isaac*, of *Jacob*; of *David*; that he should be born at *Bethlehem*; that he should appear about the time of the “departure of the sceptre from *Judah*,” that he should be “cut off, but not for himself; be “pierced, be put to death with the wicked, and “buried by the rich; that he should be sold for “thirty pieces of silver;” and all the circumstances of his death particularly pointed out; that all these and many other predictions, fulfilled in *Christ*, and answering to none else but him, should be found in the Scriptures preserved by the *Jews*, the violent opposers of *Christ* and his religion; let the inventors of Christianity (supposing it an invention) have been ever so cunning, they never could have modelled the whole scheme from the very beginning, so as it should answer their purpose; they could never have brought things about in such a manner, as to make them suit in such a number of particulars, as will appear by running over the various evidences for our religion.

And it is notorious, that not only the weak and illiterate, but some of the wise and learned, embraced Christianity at the time, when it might with ease and certainty have been discovered to be an imposture, if it really was so: That those who at first were prejudiced against it, were afterwards converted to the belief of it: That numbers of those, who certainly knew, whether *Jesus Christ*

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was really risen from the dead or not, gave up their lives in attestation, not of an opinion, but of a simple fact, concerning the truth or falshood of which they could not have the least doubt: That the first propagators of Christianity were not to be put to silence by all the opposition they met with from all the powers of the world: That though they expected nothing but persecution, imprisonment, scourging, and all kinds of abuse, in every place they went to, without any one earthly comfort, to make up for their sufferings, without the least shadow of any temporal advantage; they went on still indefatigable and unconquerable in publishing the resurrection of *Jesus*. Is it conceivable, that human nature must not have been tired out with going on day after day, and year after year, for a whole lifetime, propagating a known falshood, by which they were to get nothing but misery in this world, and damnation hereafter?

Deplorable is the objection started here by the opposers of Christianity; That our Saviour's disciples did not see him rise. As if it were of any consequence to the certainty of his being really alive again, that no one saw him come out of his tomb. That he was certainly dead, is unquestionable; he having been publicly crucified, and stabbed in the side with a spear, as he hung on the cross. And that he was certainly alive again, was as unquestionable to those who conversed with him for six weeks together, after  
his

his passion, as if they had been witnesses of his rising. And that he did not shew himself to the people (who deserved no such favour) but only to chosen witnesses, is an objection as wretched as the former; the only question being, Whether the witnesses, who declare that *Christ* was alive after his crucifixion, are credible; or not. But to proceed;

That a person of the conspicuous and extraordinary abilities of *St. Paul*, should be drawn into such a course of extravagance as to travel thousands of miles, propagating every where an idle fiction of his having had a vision of *Christ*, and being commissioned by him to preach his religion over the world: That a man of his learning and judgment should, publicly, declare to the world his full persuasion of the truth of a doctrine decried by almost all the worldly-wise of those times: That he should own himself to have been formerly in the wrong in opposing Christianity: That he should take public shame to himself before all mankind, and commit his recantation to writing, to stand on record as long as the world lasted. What a degree of madness, or fascination, must that have been, which would have been equal to all these effects? But what sort of madness or fascination must that have been, which could come to such a height, and not have wholly incapacitated the apostle for every thing consistent with common sense and discretion? Yet we find the works of

this illustrious propagator of Christianity, considered only in a critical light, are, to say the least, equal to those of the greatest geniuses, and best reasoners, of antiquity ; and himself by heathen writers celebrated as a person of superior abilities. And that neither our Saviour nor his apostles were in their own times taken for enthusiasts or phrenetics, is plain from the treatment they met with : For persecution was never, that I know of, thought a proper way of proceeding against such unhappy persons, as had lost the use of their reason. That either the great apostle of the Gentiles, the other propagators of Christianity, or its glorious Author himself, were persons deficient in the use of their faculties, will appear too ludicrous to require a grave answer, if it be only remembered, that it is the very character of madness to start from one reverie to another, and to be incapable of all regularity or steadiness of design. For a number of persons to be possessed with the same species of madness ; that they should act in concert, and carry on a complicated and stupendous scheme for a long course of years ; that they should do what all the learned and wise never could do ; that they should out-wit the whole world ; or rather, that they should reform and improve the world ; to alledge the probability of all this, would be insulting the common sense of mankind.

Nor has the supposition, of the apostles being wilful impostors, any more hold of reason or probability,

probability, than that of their being enthusiasts or lunatics. For it is evident, as already observed, that the religion they have established in the world, is no scheme for imposing upon mankind, nor at all calculated to deceive. Christianity, as it stands in the apostolic writings, is manifestly a scheme for opening the eyes of mankind; not for blinding their understandings; for improving, not confounding human reason; for removing, not riveting prejudice. And it is given with all that unadorned and artless simplicity, which distinguishes truth from imposture. Nor can the least surmise or suspicion of any indirect design be fastened upon them. No scheme for aggrandizing themselves. Their ambitious views vanished at the death of their Master, And from the time of his ascension, we see their whole conduct and behaviour wholly disengaged from, and superior to, all worldly designs. We see them disclaiming riches, honours, and pleasures, and teaching their followers to aspire only after *future* glory, honour, and immortality, and to trample under their feet the vain amusements of the *present* short and perishing life. The accounts they have left of their own errors and weaknesses, suit very ill with a scheme to impose on mankind. The dispute, which we know arose between them, must have discovered the plot, if there had been one. For it is evident, that they did not spare one another, and that they have not at all softened things, in the accounts they

have left on record of the differences which arose between them. Their accusation of their countrymen; and their defying, in the most public manner, their most inveterate enemies to lay any thing justly to their charge; what are the genuine marks of integrity and simplicity of intention, if these are not?

There is indeed no argument for the truth of Christianity more irresistible than the character and conduct of its first propagators, and especially of its glorious Author. No human sagacity could, from mere invention, have put together a fictitious account of the behaviour of a person, in so many strange and uncommon particulars, as the evangelists have told us of our Saviour, without either swelling up the imaginary character into that of the hero of a romance, or drawing it defaced with faults and blemishes. That human invention is by no means equal to any such task, is evident from the success of the attempts which have been made by the greatest masters of description to draw perfect characters, especially where any thing supernatural was to have a place. And that such a character, as that of our Saviour, should be drawn so uniform and consistent, at the same time that it is so wholly new and peculiar, that in all the histories, and all the epic poems, in the world, there is no pattern, from whence the least hint could be taken, to form it by; that this character, in which the greatness is of so extraordinary and stupendous

ous a kind, that whatever is great in those of warriors, or heroes, or kings, is despised and neglected by him, and infinitely beneath him; that such a character should be the invention of a few illiterate men; and that it should by them be exhibited, not by studied encomiums, but by a bare unadorned narration of facts, but such facts as are no where else to be equalled; he who can believe that all this could be the effect of mere human invention, without superior interposition, must be capable of believing any thing. So that I may defy all the opposers of revelation to answer this question, How we came to have such a character, as that of *Christ*, drawn as it is, and drawn by such authors, if it was not taken from a real original, and if that original was not something above human?

I do not think it would be a hard matter to write a volume upon this subject, without treading much in the footsteps of those who have writ upon the life of *Christ*. But without considering at present, what has, or has not, been said by others, I shall only desire the reader to peruse carefully the evangelical history (with what helps may be necessary); attending, as he goes through the account of the words and actions of our Saviour, to the disposition, genius, or spirit, which shines throughout the whole. Let him consider the tender compassion and love for a race of perverse, self-destroyed creatures, which must have prompted this glorious Being to condescend thus



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low to instruct and save them from vice and its direful consequences. At the same time, let the wisdom he shewed in doing so, be considered; since nothing conceivable is of greater importance, or more worthy of a Being of the highest dignity, than the recovery of a species, otherwise lost and undone, to virtue and endless happiness. Let the prudence and judgment of this Divine instructor be attentively considered. How easy had it been for him, in whom were hid all the treasures of wisdom, to have given forth his instructions in such a manner as to have overpowered all human understanding? How hard do we see it is for men of superior learning to adapt their lessons to the capacities of the young and ignorant? How irksome to most men the employment of teaching? How few teachers are there, who can avoid shewing some affectation of their superiority in knowledge? Who could have expected, that ever he, who was the instrument of God in making this world, whose Divine penetration saw by intuition through all the depths of science, which a *Newton* could only collect by laborious enquiry, by accurate calculation, and distant analogy; that one, capable of instructing the most enlightened arch-angel, should condescend to initiate in first principles, a multitude of ignorant, illiterate mortals. “Blessed are the humble, the meek, the merciful.” Here is no affectation of mystic learning; no pompous ostentation of profound science, no nice distinction  
of

of speculative points. And yet, when all is duly considered, it was no more derogation from the dignity of a Teacher capable of instructing angels, to condescend to give to those, who may hereafter come to be companions of angels, the first principles of virtue, which is the only true wisdom, than for a philosopher to teach his son the first rudiments of learning. Then how wisely does he suit his instructions both to the capacities and dispositions of his hearers ! Parable and allegory have ever been thought the most entertaining manner of communicating instruction. The severity of the precept is lost in the entertainment of the fable. The sensible image reflects a light upon the moral thought ; and the abstract thought gives an importance to the sensible representation. By apt similitude therefore, and allegories drawn from the surrounding objects, did this great Teacher recommend to his hearers the most solemn truths and important precepts. The honest and teachable mind was thus allured to search after divine knowledge ; while the proud and obstinate scorned the trouble of enquiring into the easy meaning of the figures used by him. Thus did his instructions become what all addresses to free and reasoning beings ought, a part of trial and discipline. So that they who were well disposed might receive improvement and advantage, and the hard-hearted might hear and not understand.

With what graceful ease, and yet solemn composure, does he accommodate himself to the conversation of all sorts of persons! Among the wise and learned, how does he shine in communicating clear and important truth, confuting their artificial sophisms, and silencing their malicious cavils! Among the illiterate, how does he condescend to the meanness of their understandings, and adapt his instructions to their apprehension, and usual train of thinking, raising his reflexions from the present objects, and improving upon the most common occasions! Even women and children are taken notice of by this Wiseft of teachers. And with reason. For no well disposed human mind is of little consequence. Whatever it is at present, it is in the way to be hereafter great and glorious. The character, in short, which the Saviour of the world assumed, seems to have been equally sublime and amiable.

How does his wisdom, and the dignity of his character, appear in his discouraging all idle curiosity, which engages the mind unprofitably, and takes off its attention from the awful business for which we were sent into the world; at the same time, that he fails not to answer any useful question that is put to him; and ever turns the attention to something great, and worthy of a Divine instructor to dwell upon!

How different his manner of communicating instruction, from the dictates of the artful impostor or wild enthusiast! Instead of threatening with

fire and sword the opposers of Divine truth, he kindly forewarns them of the natural and judicial effects of their impious obstinacy and malice. Instead of thundering out spiritual anathemas or excommunications against those who would not take his religion on trust; instead of depriving them of the temporal advantages, to which every peaceable subject has an unquestionable right; instead of employing the secular arm to decide in matters of conscience, where civil power has no right to interpose; instead of setting the world in a flame about mere speculative opinions, and doubtful doctrines, this Divine teacher applies himself to mankind, as one who understood mankind. He addresses himself to their reason. He calls upon them to exert their understanding. He does not insist upon their believing him on his own assertion, though he might have done so, on a much better pretence, than the purest church, the most numerous council, or the infallible bishop of *Rome* himself. He claims no implicit authority over their faith; but appeals to the works, which they saw him perform, and to the prophecies of their own Scriptures, which they saw fulfilled in him. The doctrines, he dwells upon, and labours to inculcate, are the great and important points of morality, the duties of love to God, and benevolence to man; the heavenly virtues of sincerity, self-denial, contempt of a vain world, humility, meekness, and the other excellent graces, which make the only true ornament

nament of the human mind, which have a natural tendency to qualify it for the society of all well-disposed beings in the universe. Is not this the very doctrine, are not these the very precepts, which one would expect the messenger of God to mankind to teach and inculcate? The perverse, or vicious opposer of religion may cavil as long as he will; but I think myself safe in venturing the cause I defend upon the sense of every well-disposed mind; to which I dare appeal, Whether it does not *feel* the Divine authority of this heavenly Teacher, in the excellence of his doctrines and precepts? But to proceed;

How patiently does he bear with the mean and groveling ideas his disciples had at first of the character in which the *Messiah* ought to appear! How kindly does he overlook their weakness, in fixing all their desires on worldly grandeur! What pity does he shew for the unhappy uninstructed part of the people, the publicans and sinners! How does he shew himself ready to pardon, though by no means to justify, the offences, which proceed from the unthinking indulgence of passion and appetite, while he denounces woes upon the hardened and hypocritical sinner! Wonderful! that he, who himself knew no fault, should thus bear with the faults of wretched mortals; while they, though all guilty before God, find it so hard to bear with one another.

With

With what open generosity does he bestow the highest encomium that can be deserved by mortal man, on one who had just before treated him and his pretensions in a very slighting manner. I mean *Natbanael*, who, upon *Philip's* informing him, that the miracles performed by *Jesus* of *Nazareth*, gave ground to conclude, that he was the *Christ*, of whose appearance there was then a general expectation. "What," says that weak and narrow-minded man, "do you expect the *Messiah* to come from so contemptible a place as *Nazareth*?" Yet when, at the desire of *Philip*, he is prevailed upon to go and see him; as soon as he appears, with what unreserved openness does He, who knew all that was in man, overlook his prejudice, and celebrate him as a pattern of truth and sincerity of heart! How different from this is the conduct of peevish mortals! Does one hear the least surmise of a reflection supposed to have been cast upon him by another? How hard does he find it to forgive the mortal injury; how few can ever bring themselves heartily to love those who have taken the smallest liberty of this kind!

Excepting two of *Christ's* miracles, one of which it is needless to mention at present, its effect being of no material consequence at all, but as an emblem of the future destruction of the *Jews*, and the other was a just punishment on the sufferers; the direct tendency of all of them was kind and beneficial, and suitable to the character

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character of the Saviour of the world, who came to deliver mankind from vice and misery. What blessings might not be expected from one, whose appearance in the world was signalized not by vain triumphs, and honorary gifts; but who expressed his goodness to mankind in giving food to the hungry, sight to the blind, health to the diseased, the use of reason to the distracted and possessed, pardon to the wounded conscience, heavenly knowledge to the unenlightened mind, and the prospect of endless happiness to the anxious and doubtful?

When his perverse enemies, with a degree of impiety never equalled before or since, accused the best of characters of the worst of crimes; alledging that he, who came to destroy the kingdom of *Satan*, was guilty of a collusion with *Satan*; thus effectually defeating the highest and most powerful means of conviction and reformation, that could be offered to free and rational agents; how does he receive their impious accusation? Not with a deadly stroke from that hand, which could wield all the thunder of heaven; but with a calm remonstrance on the absurdity of their accusation, the greatness of their crime, and the fearful vengeance they were drawing upon themselves.

What superior sagacity does he shew in defeating the artful and ensnaring questions put to him by the crafty and the learned! How does he answer not only to mens words; but to their thoughts,

thoughts, and designs! Let the conversation between him and *Nicodemus* be an example among many. Of which the following short account will serve to illustrate this observation, which is highly necessary to be attended to, in order to enter into the beauty and propriety of many of our Saviour's discourses and answers.

This teacher and ruler of the *Jews* having secretly some opinion of our Saviour as a prophet, and desiring to have some particular conversation with him, goes to him in the night, to avoid giving umbrage to his fellow-doctors; being unwilling to be suspected of any inclination to dissent from the established and fashionable opinions. He begins with acknowledging the reality and the greatness of the miraculous works performed by him. To which compliment our Saviour returns an answer, which seems very abrupt; but is exactly suited to the character and design of *Nicodemus*. The sense of it is as follows.

“ I understand what you mean by coming to  
 “ me thus privately. But that you may at once  
 “ be able to judge of the doctrine, which I teach,  
 “ to see how unsuitable it is to all manner of  
 “ worldly views, and may not be deceived into  
 “ an opinion of your being of a character and  
 “ temper fit to be a disciple of mine; I tell you  
 “ at once, That, as the bulk of mankind are,  
 “ it is necessary for one who would enter upon  
 “ the profession of the pure and spiritual reli-  
 “ gion,



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“ gion, which I am come into the world to teach  
 “ mankind, to be as much changed in his dis-  
 “ position and practice, as if he was to be new-  
 “ born.”

*Nicodemus*, not expecting our Saviour to answer to his thoughts, puts a very absurd construction upon his words. Our Saviour condescends to explain the metaphor he had used, and to inform *Nicodemus*, that he meant it in a spiritual and emblematical, not a literal sense. He then goes on to the following purpose :

“ If you mean to enter upon the spiritual  
 “ religion, which I teach, you must not be sur-  
 “ prised, that I lay the foundation of my doc-  
 “ trine, not in a set of new ceremonies and  
 “ outward observances, but in a total change  
 “ of heart and life. For you must resolve upon  
 “ giving up your present secular schemes, and  
 “ becoming indifferent to all worldly pursuits,  
 “ when they come in competition with real  
 “ internal goodness.”

He afterwards gives *Nicodemus* some account of his mission, and design in coming into the world; and concludes with condemning the obstinacy and carnality of the people, and of *Nicodemus* himself among the rest, and shews, that his and their prejudices in favour of their errors, and attachment to their vices, were the cause of their opposition to his pure and spiritual doctrine. *Nicodemus* being only a *little more* inquisitive, and having a *little more* candor in his disposition,

disposition, than the rest of the *Jewish* doctors; but not enough to carry him through all difficulties and trials, is treated thus plainly and roughly by him, who exactly knew what was in every man, and not finding the religion of *Jesus* to his mind, leaves him, and returns to his former profession, without having any good effect wrought upon him by the conversation, that we know of, except, that he seems, by one instance in the sequel of the history, to be more inclinable to favour him than the rest of his fraternity. A character, this of *Nicodemus*, fatally common among Christians. To be in the way toward the kingdom of God, and yet, through a defect of some one necessary virtue, or a fatal attachment to some one favourite vice, to come short of it at last.

To return, How ready is he to find an excuse for the unpardonable stupidity of his disciples, in suffering themselves, the last time they were to enjoy his company before his death, to be overcome with sleep, while they saw the anguish their Master was in, which, in a Being of his power and intrepidity, might justly have alarmed them with the expectation of somewhat to the highest degree terrible and shocking! And good reason there is to conclude, that the approach of death was not all that produced in him those dreadful emotions of horror and amazement. Does he not suffer the traitor himself to follow him for several years, to partake of his counsels,

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to hear his Divine doctrine? Does he not forewarn him of the wickedness he had in his heart, and give him all advantage for relenting? Even when he advances to betray his Lord with a treacherous embrace, does he strike him dead with a word? Though they all make their escape, and leave him in his extremity, does he punish, or even reproach them, after his resurrection, for their unfaithfulness to him, for whom they ought to have laid down their lives, who came to lay down his life for them?

Let the noble and heroic behaviour of the prince of peace, toward his wicked and implacable enemies, be considered. How does he shew himself above their utmost malice? Does he not go on still in his calm dignity, and equal goodness, in spite of their utmost fury, till he has finished his ministry, and the time comes for him to return to the state of happiness and glory he had left. When their hour and the power of darkness prevails, with what meekness does he give himself up into their cruel hands? When they come to apprehend him, and, struck with the majesty which surrounded him, fly back and fall before him to the ground, he exerts no vindictive power against them, though he could with a word have struck them so as they should have risen no more, and could have called legions of angels, who would have thought it their honour to have been commanded to interpose for his deliverance. But though he wrought a  
miracle

miracle to avoid regal power, he works none to escape an infamous death.

Behold the innocent arraigned before the guilty. The most amiable of characters treated worse than the most odious deserves at any human hands. The future Judge of mankind brought before a human tribunal. He who did no sin, and in whose mouth was found no guile, sentenced to die, and a robber and murderer pardoned. They, for whom the Saviour of the world came from heaven to give his precious life, long to imbrue their hands in the very blood, which was to be shed for them. O the diabolical fury of hypocrisy detected! Crucify him; crucify him; cry the bloody priests, and the blinded people echo back the madning voice. But will the Lord of life suffer himself to be spoiled of life by a sett of miserable worms, whom he can crush to nothing in a moment? No. He lays it down of himself; no man takes, or can take it from him. He came to lay down his life for the life of the world. And if daring mortals will be so impious as to stretch forth unhallowed hands against him, the decree of heaven will nevertheless be fulfilled, and they, who will heap damnation upon themselves, shall be left to the destruction they have sought. Yet hold your butchering hands, unthinking wretches. Or if his sacred blood must stream to wash a sinful world from guilt; let the high priest with reverence offer him on the altar, the true, the

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last,

last, the only effectual sacrifice for sin. So shall you, and your nation, escape the destruction which hangs over you.—They harden their rocky hearts against all sense of pity. They urge their own destruction. Let not then the eye of day behold so black a deed. Let heaven hide its face from such a sight. They pierce those hands whose salutary touch gave health and strength, and those feet which went about doing good. They stretch him on the cross. They stop their ears against the groans of suffering innocence. But the inanimate earth feels, and shakes with horror at the impiety of her inhabitants. The rocks burst in pieces, and nature is in agonies. The sleep of death is broken by the convulsion. The graves open their throats, and cast up the ghastly dead. An unseen hand rends the veil of the temple, and exposes the holy place, into which it was forbidden to enter. His agonies now grow stronger. His pangs redouble. The choirs of angels mourn the sufferings of their Prince. Hell is moved, and the dæmons enjoy a short triumph. Darkness covers the face of nature, and chaos seems ready to swallow all. He calls on his God and Father, the witness of his innocence, and approver of his obedience. He prays for those by whose murdering hands he dies. He raises his voice aloud. His strength is yet entire. But having finished the work, and the prophecies being accomplished, by his own original power over his own life, he resigns his soul

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foul into the hands of the supreme Father of all, and, bowing his head, expires: He dies; and yet his murderers live. His death raises a guilty world to life. Tremendous mystery! Not to be explained, till the veil of time be rent asunder, and eternity expose to view the amazing scene of Divine government, too vast for mortal comprehension. Glory to God in the highest! On earth peace, and good-will toward men!

## CONCLUSION.

AT last I have, in great weakness, brought this long labour to a period. On reviewing the whole, I find it very necessary to beg the candid reader's indulgence in favour of many deficiencies; though I hope he has not found in the work, any one sentiment, by which he may have run the hazard of his being deceived or misled to his hurt. Whoever duly considers the disadvantage, a writer labours under, who lives a life of constant care and labour, without ever knowing what it is to have a vacant mind, and whose hours of study are only those few, which remain after eight or ten of almost every day in the week indispensably engaged in the laborious employment of teaching, and the other cares attending the charge of youth; whoever considers this, and is, at the same time, at all a judge of the difficulty of composition; will, it is hoped, be inclinable to make allowances for any deficiencies, which may be at all pardonable. It may indeed be answered to this, That a person, whose way of life (exclusive of other disadvantages) necessarily deprives him of that leisure and vacancy of mind, which are of such consequence to a writer, had better quit that province to those, whose stations allow them more leisure and freedom from care. Perhaps this assertion

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may

may be in some measure just. And yet the gentlemen, who undertake the education of youth, do not in general scruple to bestow some time in labouring for the public. The pious and learned Dr. *Doddridge*, lately deceased, is a remarkable instance; who so husbanded the hours he chiefly borrowed from the refreshments of nature, as to be able to publish six or eight times the bulk of this book. For my own part, had my circumstances in life been equal to the expence of printing this work, which never had been undertaken, if it had not been with a direct view to the advantage of the youth educated by me, who, I hope, will find it useful as an introduction to life, to study, and to moral and religious knowledge; had my circumstances, I say, been equal to the expence of printing this book, and giving it them *gratis*; I should not have troubled the public with it; nor do I intend ever more to undertake any work of such a size.

And now, before I lay aside my pen, I beg leave earnestly to request the reader, and especially, above all others, those for whose sake this work was undertaken, to attend carefully to the few following serious remonstrances. If the reader has perused the whole work, without receiving any benefit or improvement from it, he may profit by what *still remains*, by seriously examining himself in the following manner.

“Hast thou considered, O my soul, what thou art, and for what created? Dost thou habitu-



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“ally think of thyself as an intelligence capable  
 “of immortality, and brought into being on  
 “purpose for endless and inconceivable hap-  
 “piness? Does the thought of an hereafter  
 “engage thy supreme attention? Is eternity  
 “for ever in thy view? Dost thou faithfully  
 “labour, wish, and pray, for the necessary abili-  
 “ties and dispositions for acting up to the  
 “dignity of thy nature, and the end of thy  
 “creation? Or dost thou trifle with what is to  
 “thee of infinite importance? Thou wouldst not  
 “surely suffer thyself to be deceived out of thy  
 “happiness? Thou wouldst not put out the eye  
 “of thy reason, and rush headlong upon de-  
 “struction? Try thy prudence and sincerity,  
 “then, by comparing the diligence thou usest,  
 “and the care thou bestowest, upon the things  
 “thou knowest thyself to be sincerely attached  
 “to, with what thou think’st sufficient for  
 “securing an eternity of happiness. Dost thou  
 “rise early and sit up late, to get a wretched  
 “pittance of the perishing wealth of this world?  
 “And dost thou wholly forget, that thou hast an  
 “eternity to provide for? Is money thy first  
 “thought in the morning, and thy last at night,  
 “and the subject of every hour between? And  
 “canst thou find no vacant moment for a  
 “thought about thy great interest? Art thou  
 “ever ready, and upon the catch, to seize the  
 “empty bubbles of life, as they float along the  
 “stream of time? And dost thou let slip the  
 “only

“ only opportunity for making provision for  
 “ futurity ; the opportunity, which, if it once  
 “ escapes thee, thou knowest, a whole eternity  
 “ will never more bring back ? Dost thou suspect  
 “ every person, and watch over every circum-  
 “ stance, that may any way affect thy worldly  
 “ affairs ? And dost thou take up with any  
 “ security, or with absolute uncertainty, to found  
 “ thy prospect of future happiness upon ? Thou  
 “ dost not count it prudence to say to thyself,  
 “ Riches will flow in of themselves ; I shall of  
 “ course rise to a station of honour. And dost  
 “ thou think it wise to say, God is merciful ; he  
 “ will not punish my neglect of him, or my re-  
 “ bellion against him ; though both Scripture  
 “ and reason shew it to be impossible, that vice  
 “ should in the end be happy ? Or dost thou  
 “ pretend to have found out a new way to hap-  
 “ piness ? Dost thou propose to outwit infinite  
 “ Wisdom ? Thou canst not surely think of  
 “ being happy, without being virtuous ? Thou  
 “ canst not dream of a rational creature’s coming  
 “ to happiness, under the government of a  
 “ Being of infinite purity, while his whole  
 “ nature is depraved and polluted by vice ? Does  
 “ any wise prince pardon a rebellious subject,  
 “ while he continues in a state of rebellion ?  
 “ Dost thou expect that the infinitely wise Go-  
 “ vernor of the universe should, for love of thee,  
 “ new-model his august oeconomy, reverse his  
 “ unchangeable laws, and take an enemy to all  
 “ good

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“ good into his bosom ? Dost thou even imagine  
 “ it possible, that He, whose nature is unchange-  
 “ ably good, should ever change so, as to be-  
 “ come the friend of vice ? Hast thou any con-  
 “ ception of the possibility of happiness’s being  
 “ the consequence of vice ? Canst thou conceive,  
 “ that heaven would be heaven to a being, whose  
 “ faculties were overturned, whose moral sense  
 “ was perverted ; to whose mind goodness had  
 “ no beauty ; to whose understanding truth and  
 “ virtue were no adequate objects ; who could  
 “ receive no joy from the contemplation of  
 “ moral excellence ? who would prefer a sensual  
 “ gratification to the beatific vision of God ?  
 “ And dost thou found thy hopes of future hap-  
 “ piness upon a direct impossibility ? Dost thou  
 “ assure thyself of obtaining what it is clearly  
 “ impossible thou ever shouldst obtain, and what  
 “ if thou dost not obtain, thou art utterly un-  
 “ done ? But thou sayest, that this is not thy  
 “ dreadful case. That thou proceedest upon a  
 “ more prudent scheme, in a matter, upon which  
 “ thy all depends.

“ Dost thou, then, make it thy supreme care  
 “ to perform thy whole duty, without neglecting  
 “ the least article of it, however disagreeable to  
 “ thy temper, or turn of mind ; and to avoid  
 “ every vice, every temptation to every vice,  
 “ every appearance of every vice, however grate-  
 “ ful to thy depraved disposition ? Dost thou  
 “ constantly watch over thyself ; dost thou sus-  
 “ pect

“ peest every other person, lest his example, or  
 “ influence, mislead thee? Dost thou often, and  
 “ regularly, meditate on thy ways, and exa-  
 “ mine thy heart and thy life? Dost thou per-  
 “ fectly know thy own weakness? Hast thou all  
 “ thy infirmities engraven on thy remembrance?  
 “ Are thy sins ever before thee? Dost thou dread  
 “ vice more than poverty, pain, or death? Dost  
 “ thou carefully restrain every passion and appe-  
 “ tite within due bounds? Art thou afraid of  
 “ the fatal allurements of riches, honours, and  
 “ pleasures? Dost thou indulge them sparingly?  
 “ Dost thou enjoy the gratifications of sense  
 “ with fear and trembling? Art thou ever sus-  
 “ picious of thy frail nature, on this dangerous  
 “ side? Dost thou carefully steer clear of the  
 “ rocks, on which multitudes have struck, and  
 “ made shipwreck of their souls? Or dost thou,  
 “ in insolent confidence of thy own fancied  
 “ strength of mind, dally with temptation, and  
 “ play upon the brink of vice and destruction?  
 “ Dost thou habitually labour to make sure of  
 “ keeping within bounds? Dost thou often  
 “ deny thyself, rather than run the smallest  
 “ hazard of offending? Dost thou live such a  
 “ life of temperance, that thou couldst at any  
 “ time enjoy the satisfaction of a peaceful mind,  
 “ and a good conscience, though at once de-  
 “ prived of all the gaieties and amusements of  
 “ affluence? Or dost thou give thyself up whol-  
 “ ly to ease and indolence; to luxury and intem-  
 “ perance;

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“ perance; to pleasure and folly? Dost thou  
 “ take thy swing, without restraint or measure,  
 “ of every lawless enjoyment; as if the present  
 “ state were never to come to an end; as if thou  
 “ hadst been created only for pleasure and idle-  
 “ ness; as if thou thought’st of a future state,  
 “ not of spiritual existence; of perpetual im-  
 “ provement in wisdom and goodness; and  
 “ of sublime employment and action; but of a  
 “ *Mabometan* paradise, an endless scene of luxury  
 “ and sensuality? If thou art in good earnest  
 “ resolved to conquer thy unruly passions, to  
 “ restrain thy sensual appetites, and to regulate  
 “ the motions of thy mind according to the dic-  
 “ tates of reason and conscience, and the more  
 “ sure directions of Divine revelation, thou wilt  
 “ study *thyself* more than all the sciences; thou  
 “ wilt often retire within thyself; thou wilt be  
 “ ever finding in thy own mind something to  
 “ regulate and redress; thou wilt not fly from  
 “ thyself; thou wilt not be continually racking  
 “ thy invention to find out somewhat to drown  
 “ thought and reflexion; thou wilt beg of thy  
 “ friends to hold up to thee the mirror of faith-  
 “ ful remonstrance; thou wilt not court the  
 “ slavish flatterer to pour through thy ears the  
 “ luscious poison, which stupifies the mind, and  
 “ renders it insensible of its own faults, and  
 “ blind to its own follies. Thou wilt labour to  
 “ work into the very essence of thy soul, the  
 “ virtues, which are indispensably necessary for  
 “ bringing

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“ bringing and keeping it under due regulation.  
“ Consideration, humility, self-knowledge, self-  
“ reverence! These will be the great lessons,  
“ which it will employ thy life to learn. And  
“ thou wilt wish for the life of a patriarch to  
“ study them fully, and to reduce them to  
“ practice.

“ Again, dost thou, O my soul, harbour any  
“ thought of malice, envy, or revenge against  
“ thy fellow-creature? Dost thou stand so little  
“ in awe of Him who made thy fellow-creature  
“ and thee, who will at last judge both him and  
“ thee, and to whom alone vengeance belongs;  
“ dost thou fear him so little, as to think of  
“ breaking loose upon his creature in his pre-  
“ sence? Hast thou considered, that, if thy  
“ Maker do not shew mercy upon thee, thou  
“ hadst better never have been born? And dost  
“ thou hope for mercy from infinite Purity, who  
“ (thyself an offender) canst think of refusing  
“ mercy to thy brother? Dost thou imagine,  
“ that, in a future state of perfect benevolence,  
“ there will be any place found for the sordid  
“ mind, whose affections are shrunk and contract-  
“ ed to the narrow circle of self and family? Dost  
“ thou think there will be any happiness for thee  
“ in a state of perfect harmony and love, unless  
“ thou work into thy very soul the god-like  
“ virtue of unbounded benevolence? Thou  
“ canst not think a disposition to cruelty, to  
“ deceit, to anger, hatred, or revenge; thou canst  
“ no:

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“ not think a mind given to low craft, to narrow  
 “ ill-will, or to sordid selfishness, can be found  
 “ fit for a state of happiness founded on univer-  
 “ sal love and kindness. Thou canst not ima-  
 “ gine that He, whose very nature is love, will  
 “ give happiness to one, whose mind is deformed  
 “ with angry and malevolent passions. Thou  
 “ canst not expect, that He will, by giving  
 “ admittance to one ill-disposed mind, render  
 “ the happiness of innumerable glorified beings  
 “ precarious. Nor canst thou even conceive the  
 “ possibility of a mind’s being *capable* of hap-  
 “ piness, which has not in itself so much as the  
 “ foundation, or first principle, on which hap-  
 “ piness depends; a temper qualified for enjoy-  
 “ ing happiness. If therefore thou hast any  
 “ thought of being hereafter a member of  
 “ that universal blessed society of chosen spirits,  
 “ of the excellent ones of the earth, of souls  
 “ formed to love, and peace, and harmony;  
 “ thou wilt set thyself in earnest to enrich  
 “ thy mind with the heavenly graces of meek-  
 “ ness, patience, forbearance, and benevolence;  
 “ and in the exercise of these virtues thou wilt  
 “ find joys inconceivable to the sordid sons of  
 “ earth; thou wilt endeavour to be to thy fellow-  
 “ creatures, even in this world, a guardian angel,  
 “ and a god.

“ Dost thou, O my soul, consider thyself as  
 “ the creature of Omnipotence, formed to fill a  
 “ place,

“ place, and contribute thy share toward carry-  
 “ ing on a scheme for the happiness of multi-  
 “ tudes? Dost thou think, there is no duty  
 “ owing by thee in consequence of the honour,  
 “ and the favour, done thee, in calling thee forth  
 “ from thy original nothing, and giving thee  
 “ an opportunity to act an illustrious part, and  
 “ rise in the creation? Canst thou think of  
 “ thyself as capable of knowing, fearing, loving,  
 “ and adoring the Supreme excellence, and yet  
 “ as no way obliged to any of these duties?  
 “ Does not, on the contrary, the very capacity  
 “ infer the necessity of performing them? Canst  
 “ thou go on from day to day, and from year  
 “ to year, without ever raising a thought to thy  
 “ Creator? Hast thou no ambition to ennoble  
 “ thy mind with the contemplation of infinite  
 “ excellence? Hast thou no desire to imitate in  
 “ thy low sphere the All-perfect pattern? Dost  
 “ thou think ever to go to God, if thou dost not  
 “ love God? The very Heathen will tell thee,  
 “ such a hope is absurd! Dost thou think, thy  
 “ Creator will raise thee to the enjoyment of  
 “ himself against thy own inclination, and in  
 “ spite of thy impiety? Should he now trans-  
 “ port thee to the third heavens, dost thou  
 “ imagine thou wouldst find any enjoyment  
 “ there, with a mind sunk in sordid sensuality,  
 “ deformed by vicious passions, and wholly  
 “ insensible of the sublime enjoyments of a  
 “ state altogether spiritual. As ever thou  
 “ wouldst



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“ wouldst come to bliss hereafter, and avoid  
 “ utter destruction, do not deceive thyself in a  
 “ matter of infinite consequence, and where a  
 “ mistake will be irrecoverable. Thou knowest,  
 “ that as the tree falls, so it will lie; that as  
 “ death leaves thee, so judgment will find thee;  
 “ that there will be no miracle wrought in thy  
 “ favour, to *make* thee fit for future happiness;  
 “ but that thou wilt of course be disposed of  
 “ according to what thou shalt be *found* fit for;  
 “ that thy future state will be what thou thyself  
 “ hast made it. That therefore to think of  
 “ passing thy life in vice and folly, and to hope  
 “ to be wafted to future happiness upon the  
 “ wings of a few lazy and ineffectual wishes  
 “ and prayers in old age, or on a death-bed, is  
 “ to expect to be rewarded, not according to  
 “ thy works, but to thy presumptuous hopes.  
 “ Which is inconsistent both with reason and  
 “ Scripture. It is to think to attain the greatest  
 “ of all prizes, without any trouble. Yet thou  
 “ knowest that even the trifles of this world are  
 “ not attained by wishing; but by industry.  
 “ It is to imagine, that the infinitely wise Go-  
 “ vernor of the world will be put off in a man-  
 “ ner which no earthly superior would regard  
 “ otherwise than as the highest insolence. Set  
 “ thyself therefore, if thou hast any thought, in  
 “ good earnest to disengage thy attention from  
 “ the visionary delusions, and sordid gratifica-  
 “ tions, of the present state; and to fix thy  
 “ affections

“ affections on the only object that is worthy  
 “ of them, or will prove adequate to them.  
 “ Acquaint thyself with his perfections. Solace  
 “ thyself with his love. Prostrate every power  
 “ and every faculty before him, in humble ado-  
 “ ration, and self-annihilation. Trust to him  
 “ (in well-doing) for the supply of every want,  
 “ for the life that now is, and for eternity. Sa-  
 “ crifice every favourite passion, and every  
 “ craving appetite, every prospect in life, with  
 “ family, and friends, and life itself, to his obe-  
 “ dience. Never think thou hast done enough,  
 “ or canst do too much, to gain his approbation.  
 “ For if thou dost but secure that, it will be of  
 “ no consequence to thee, if all the princes and  
 “ potentates on earth frown upon thee.

“ Hast thou considered, O my soul, the stu-  
 “ pendous scene, which Revelation opens before  
 “ thee? Hast thou attended to the view there  
 “ given of the dignity of thy nature? It is to  
 “ restore thee, and thy unhappy offending fellow-  
 “ creatures, to pardon, to virtue, and to hap-  
 “ piness, that Heaven came down to tabernacle  
 “ with men; that the Lord of angels and arch-  
 “ angels humbled himself to die by the hands,  
 “ which himself, by the power of the Father,  
 “ created. It was to raise thee, and such as  
 “ thee, mean and wretched as thou art at pre-  
 “ sent, to greatness and glory, inconceivable not  
 “ only to thyself, but to the brightest seraph in  
 “ heaven; it was for this, that he, whom the  
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“ celestial hosts obey, humbled himself to a  
 “ station, and underwent sufferings, which thou  
 “ wouldst think thyself (guilty as thou art) hardly  
 “ treated in being exposed to. And canst thou,  
 “ O my soul, allow thyself to think of vice as  
 “ slight, or venial, which to prevent, and whose  
 “ fatal effects to cure, thou knowest what an  
 “ apparatus has by infinite wisdom been thought  
 “ necessary? Canst thou think of any thing as  
 “ desirable, besides virtue; which alone will,  
 “ through the Divine mercy, secure universal  
 “ happiness? Canst thou think of any thing as  
 “ terrible, but vice, which, if suffered to prevail,  
 “ would unhinge the creation? Wilt thou not  
 “ attend to the only lesson, thou art placed in  
 “ this state of discipline to learn,—Obedience?  
 “ Wilt thou shut thine eyes, and stop thine ears,  
 “ against every object around thee? For every  
 “ object teaches that important lesson? Wilt  
 “ thou pervert thy own understanding, and blind  
 “ thy own conscience? For the excellence of  
 “ virtue, and the ruinous tendency of vice, are  
 “ written upon every faculty of the mind, in  
 “ characters indelible? Wilt thou, to crown all,  
 “ to seal thy own destruction, and heap on thy-  
 “ self damnation, wilt thou neglect, or oppose,  
 “ the immediate call of Heaven itself, warning  
 “ thee to flee from the wrath to come, and to  
 “ work out with fear and trembling thy own  
 “ salvation? Thou canst not think thyself sure  
 “ of happiness, without taking the least thought  
 “ about

“ about it ? Thou canst not imagine it absolute-  
 “ ly impossible that thou shouldst come to de-  
 “ struction : If that were the case, to what pur-  
 “ pose was conscience placed in the human  
 “ breast ? To what end were the awful warnings  
 “ of sickness and pain, of judgements from  
 “ heaven on guilty nations, and death, the bitter  
 “ draught to be drunk by every individual of  
 “ the species ; for what end were those warn-  
 “ ings sent ; if future happiness were the una-  
 “ voidable and appointed fate of all mankind  
 “ promiscuously ; the vicious as well as the  
 “ virtuous, the impious as well as the devout ?  
 “ As to revelation, it is the awful voice of God  
 “ himself. Hear how kind, and yet how solemn,  
 “ its remonstrances.

“ Hear, O Heavens ; give ear, O Earth ! To  
 “ thee, O Man, I call. My voice is to the Sons  
 “ of men. The Judge of all the earth will do  
 “ right. He will by no means clear the (im-  
 “ penitently) wicked. He is a consuming fire  
 “ to the workers of iniquity. He is of purer  
 “ eyes, than to behold iniquity, or look upon  
 “ evil. The wicked shall not stand in his sight.  
 “ All that forget God shall be turned into hell.  
 “ The foul, that sins, it shall die. Without  
 “ holiness no man shall see the Lord. For eve-  
 “ ry idle word men shall be brought into judge-  
 “ ment. If any man bridles not his tongue, that  
 “ man’s religion is vain. Let every one, who  
 “ names the name of *Christ*, depart from iniquity.

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" Let him cleanse himself from all filthiness of  
 " flesh and spirit; and perfect holiness in the fear  
 " of God. Let him keep himself unspotted  
 " from the world; for if any man love the  
 " world, and the things of the world, the love of  
 " the Father is not in him. Let him avoid  
 " every appearance of evil. Let him lay aside  
 " every weight, and the sin that does the most  
 " easily beset him, and run the race set before  
 " him. Let him pluck out right eyes, and cut  
 " off right hands; that is, root out vicious in-  
 " clinations, though as dear to him, and as hard  
 " to part with. Let him resolve faithfully to  
 " practise whatsoever things are true, honest,  
 " pure, lovely, and of good report. Let him  
 " study the virtues of humility, meekness,  
 " patience, forbearance, resignation, fortitude.  
 " Let him deny ungodliness and worldly lust,  
 " and resolve to live soberly, righteously and  
 " godly. Let him have respect to all the Divine  
 " commandments; for whoever (habitually)  
 " offends in *one* point, is guilty against the  
 " *whole* law; as he thereby insults the authority,  
 " which framed the whole. If any man will be  
 " a disciple of *Christ*, let him deny himself, and  
 " take up his cross (if he be called to it) and fol-  
 " low him. For he, who does not hate (that is,  
 " overlook) father and mother, and wife and  
 " children, and houses and lands, for his sake, is  
 " not worthy of him. And whoever, in the  
 " worst of times, denies *Christ*, and his religion,  
 " before

“ before men ; him will *Christ* deny before his  
 “ Father, and his holy angels. For the disci-  
 “ ples of *Christ* must not fear them who can only  
 “ kill the body ; but after that can do no more.  
 “ He has forewarned them, whom they shall fear ;  
 “ even Him, who, after he has killed the body,  
 “ can likewise destroy the soul in hell. Let the  
 “ Christian strive to enter in at the strait gate.  
 “ For strait is the gate, and narrow the way,  
 “ which leads to life ; and few there be that find  
 “ it ; and wide is the gate, and broad the way,  
 “ which leads to destruction, and many there  
 “ be, who go in thereat. Let him give dili-  
 “ gence to make his calling and election sure.  
 “ Let him keep his loins girded, and his lamp  
 “ burning, like those, who wait for the coming  
 “ of their lord. Let him stand fast in the faith  
 “ without wavering. Let him take the whole  
 “ armour of God ; since he must wrestle not  
 “ only with flesh and blood ; but with princi-  
 “ palities and powers. Let him add to his faith  
 “ virtue, and knowledge, and temperance, and  
 “ patience, and godliness, and benevolence. Let  
 “ him be careful, that all those virtues be in  
 “ him ; and that they abound, and increase.  
 “ Let him resolve to go on to perfection, for-  
 “ getting past attainments, and reaching forward  
 “ to the things which are before, or those de-  
 “ grees of virtue, which he has not yet attained ;  
 “ let him endeavour to walk as *Christ* walked  
 “ (not form his character according to the exam-

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“ ple of men of the world); let him be a follower  
 “ of God (not of fashion); let him endeavour to  
 “ be perfect, even as his heavenly Father is per-  
 “ fect. Let him not be contented with ordi-  
 “ nary degrees of goodness; but take care that  
 “ his righteousness exceed that of scribes and  
 “ pharisees, and formal professors. And let  
 “ him resolve, in spite of all opposition, to per-  
 “ severe to the end, fighting the good fight of  
 “ faith, and working out his own salvation.  
 “ For the Son of man shall come in his glory,  
 “ and all his holy angels with him; and he shall  
 “ sit on the throne of his glory. And before  
 “ him shall be gathered all nations. And he  
 “ shall separate the good from the wicked.  
 “ And he shall say to the good on his right hand,  
 “ Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the  
 “ kingdom prepared for you from the founda-  
 “ tion of the world. And on the wicked, on his  
 “ left, he shall pass the dreadful and irreversible  
 “ sentence, Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting  
 “ fire, prepared for the Devil and his angels.

“ Here is what ought to the highest degree  
 “ to alarm thee, O my soul, if thou hast not  
 “ given thyself up to a spirit of stupidity and  
 “ insensibility. Consider, in time, ere it be too  
 “ late, what thou hast to do. Here is life and  
 “ death, the blessing and the curse, fairly set  
 “ before thee, for thy choice. If thou deceivest  
 “ thyself, thou alone wilt be the loser; and thy  
 “ loss will be irretrievable. For it is the loss,

“ not

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“ not of fading wealth, or momentary pleasure;  
“ but of endless happiness and inconceivable  
“ glory. It is the loss of thyself. And what  
“ wilt thou find to make thee up for the loss  
“ of thyself? Put then the case the most that  
“ can be to the advantage of the choice of  
“ virtue; still thou wilt find virtue to be thy  
“ true wisdom, and thy only interest; and the  
“ choice of vice to be the very madness of folly.  
“ Suppose, on one hand, thou wert sure thou  
“ couldst, by various wicked arts, attain the full  
“ enjoyment of every earthly delight; that thou  
“ wert certain of gaining the empire of the  
“ world, and of revelling in wealth and wanton-  
“ ness, like the leviathan in the deep, for a whole  
“ century of years: If for this thou wert to sell  
“ thy everlasting happiness; if for this thou  
“ wert to expose thyself to utter destruction,  
“ where would be the gain? Rather, would not  
“ the loss be infinite, and the folly of choosing it  
“ infinite? Suppose, on the other hand, that  
“ virtue and religion absolutely required thy  
“ submitting to poverty, affliction, and persecu-  
“ tion for life, and to the fiery trial of martyrdom  
“ at last; to consider, whether thou ought’st in  
“ prudence to choose the light afflictions of the  
“ present state, which are but for a moment,  
“ and are to be followed with an exceeding and  
“ eternal weight of glory; or to throw thyself  
“ into the hideous ruin and perdition, which  
“ awaits the wicked hereafter; to consider, or  
“ hesitate,



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“ hesitate, which of these ought to be chosen,  
 “ would it not be a folly infinitely greater than  
 “ his, who should hesitate whether he ought to  
 “ throw himself out of a window, when the  
 “ house is on fire, or to take to the boat, when  
 “ the ship is sinking? Suppose, that the future  
 “ issue of virtue and vice respectively were in  
 “ some measure doubtful, instead of being  
 “ certain: Suppose it were possible, that vice  
 “ might, by some inconceivable means, come  
 “ to escape, and that there were any appearance  
 “ of common sense in imagining that it might so  
 “ happen, that virtue might miss of its reward  
 “ hereafter; who would hesitate a moment,  
 “ whether he ought to choose what he knows  
 “ he cannot long enjoy at any rate, and to re-  
 “ ject what, if he attains it, will hold to eter-  
 “ nity; whether he ought to avoid afflictions,  
 “ which he is certain must, in a very few years,  
 “ at most, be over; or to make sure of avoiding  
 “ a punishment, which, if it comes upon him,  
 “ will be lasting, and severe beyond all imagi-  
 “ nation. Upon any principle, the choice of a  
 “ vicious course is apparently to the highest  
 “ degree foolish and desperate. But taking  
 “ things according to their true state, that is,  
 “ choosing vice, which is the disease of the  
 “ mind, the bane of peace and happiness even  
 “ in this life, and rejecting virtue, which, except  
 “ in the rare and unusual case of persecution, is  
 “ its own reward, even in the present state;  
 “ acting

“ acting in direct opposition to the conviction of  
 “ conscience, to the remonstrances of the wise  
 “ and good of all ages, and to the voice of  
 “ nature, and of Divine revelation itself!—All  
 “ for the sake of what is vanity and vexation,  
 “ when attained, and uncertain before-hand  
 “ whether at all attainable; but certainly not  
 “ to be enjoyed long, if attained! To give up  
 “ a happiness, certain, lasting, and immense,—  
 “ not for the actual enjoyment; but for the  
 “ bare expectation of a perishing advantage!—  
 “ to sell one’s soul—not for the possession of a  
 “ vanity; but for the uncertain prospect of a  
 “ vanity!—to give up heaven, and brave  
 “ damnation—not for a reality; but for a  
 “ dream!—for the hope of a dream!—What  
 “ words, what tongue of men, or angels, can  
 “ express the desperation of this madness! Yet  
 “ this is the wisdom of reasoning man. This  
 “ is the prudence of the children of this  
 “ world.”

Let the reader make it his constant practice  
 in this manner to examine himself, with a care  
 proportioned to the importance of the worth of  
 an immortal soul. And would to God that the  
 whole human species could have been brought  
 to the wisdom of valuing themselves according  
 to their worth. And that it were possible, in a  
 consistency with the freedom of moral agents,  
 that no one individual of the human, or any

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other rank of intelligences, should utterly perish; but that every rational mind, that has been blest with existence, might at last attain the end of its existence, the beatific enjoyment of its Creator.

THE END.

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